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# SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

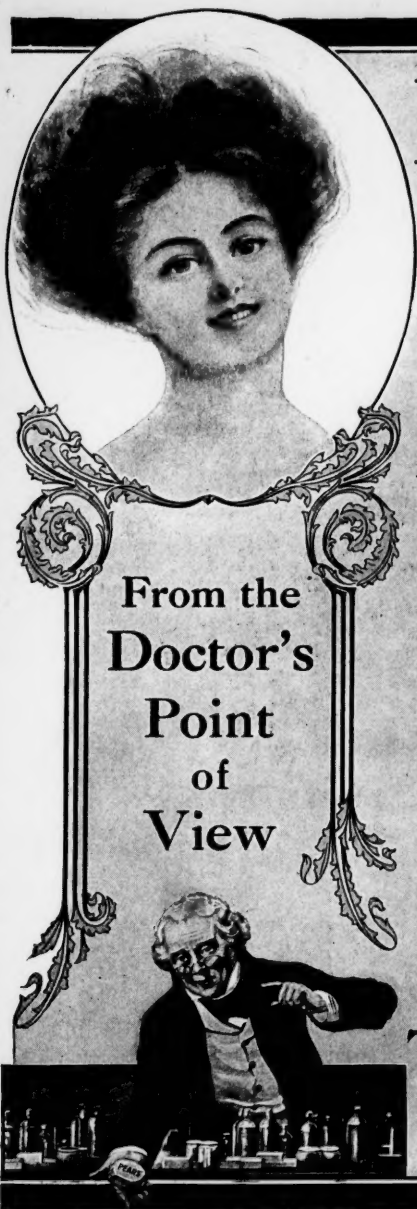
JULY 1909

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A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

JULY

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VOLUME 9

JULY, 1909

NUMBER 4





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With Raymond Hitchcock in "The Mascot"

Photo by Moffett, Chicago



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With Raymond Hitchcock in "The Mascot"

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MISS LILLIAN ALBERTSON  
In "Paid in Full"

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## CHAPTER I.

PHIL MARTIN had come, with all the country round about, to witness the sale of Mrs. Weverill's mowing machine. Stretched at full length, he lay on the bank above the road and just outside the front boundary of Mrs. Weverill's property. Near him was gathered a small group of children who had been driven from the immediate scene of the sale. He did not want the mower. He could not have bought it at any price, however low. Neither did he want to see any closer Mrs. Weverill in her badly dyed black gown, with the forlorn bundle in her arms and her other children huddling about her feet. But his curiosity, the keenest quality in rural life, had not permitted him to stay at home.

The sale, ordinary or forced, of a mower is not, as a rule, intensely interesting, but the sale of Mrs. Weverill's machine had been the talk of the Cayucos district for two weeks. Thad Weverill had always been one of the

most conspicuous failures in the county. He had done everything at unseasonable times and in unprofitable ways. His death had been as inopportune as all the other events of his life, for it had occurred just before the last ten dollars had been paid on the mower which was to enable him, according to his own theory, not only to support his own family which had, hitherto, never been supported, but also to pay the interest of the unpaid installments on his farm. That the installments, themselves, were not paid did not surprise any one. Very few of the farms in the Cayucos district had been diverted from their original owner; very few of the farmers there could pay any of the installments of the sums demanded for the property, but the interest on those sums was scrupulously collected.

When the time came for the first payment after Thad Weverill's death, Mrs. Weverill's only visible possessions were a week-old baby and the unpaid-for mower, although there were four or five other small Weverills scattered

about among the neighbors. As it happened, the owner of the land was also the owner of the machine, and inasmuch as the last payment had not been made on that, it had reverted to him, according to the terms of the contract that had been duly signed and sealed by Weverill.

Some of Mrs. Weverill's neighbors, almost as poor as she was, almost as disconsolate, had suggested to the owner of the machine that if he would give them a little time they would pay the remainder of the debt on it, thus enabling Mrs. Weverill to sell it, herself, and pay the interest on the land. But these charitable persons were informed that it was too late for any such arrangement, that they were at liberty to lend the widow whatever money they liked, but that the mower had already passed out of her possession and that it was only left on her land until the sale could be put through because, undoubtedly, some one else in the district would want to purchase it on the same kind of contract that Weverill had held. And, immediately, the sale was advertised for a definite day in April.

That day had now arrived. All the farmers of the Cayucos district were gathered in front of the barn. The sheriff's deputy was there to conduct the sale. Jim Harris, agent of the owner of land and machine, sat in his buggy, looking with ill-concealed contempt at the crowd, every man in it more or less in debt to his employer.

The conditions of the sale had been plainly stated by Sam Sturgis. The machine was in good order, practically new, and would be sold to the highest bidder. The terms would be the same as those governing the sale to Weverill, ten dollars down, ten dollars a quarter until it was paid for, with interest at six per cent. The bidding was slow, but the auctioneer persistently forced a slight raise, now on this side, now on that. Suddenly his work was interrupted by the sound of hurrying hoofs and wheels. A brown horse was pulled up short, not two feet from Phil Martin's head.

"Just hold my horse, won't you? This

is Mrs. Weverill's, isn't it? Where they are selling some sort of a machine?"

It was the sweetest voice that Phil had ever heard. When the small group of children had clamorously asserted that it was Mrs. Weverill's, the pinkest vision he had ever seen sprang from the cart in a flutter of summer drapery, hardly noticing whether or not her command had been obeyed.

The big brown horse, the low cart, the gold-mounted harness were even more interesting to the children than the sale that was going on in Mrs. Weverill's front yard. They capered about Phil's feet, under the horse and under the cart, alternating their jeers at him with exclamations of wondering admiration.

Young Martin had not taken his eyes from the girl as she impetuously opened the gate and hurried breathlessly up the path.

"Are you Mrs. Weverill?" She had turned instinctively to the pathetic, black-gowned woman. "I am Barbara Prime. Mrs. Lane told me something about your trouble. I—I didn't understand just what she meant but—but this sale of your machine, here, seemed such an outrage I thought there must be some mistake somewhere; no one could be so cruel, and I thought——"

The eyes of every one in the yard were resting on the girl as she spoke hurriedly; in her voice and manner there was a curious mixture of authority and diffidence. Even Mrs. Weverill looked at her for a moment. Then her tired eyes fell once more to the ragged bundle in her arms.

"Oh, no," she murmured in a broken voice. "There ain't no mistake." She was so downcast by misfortune, past and present, that she could not resent this act of definite, brutal injustice, that she could not hope for any relief. "The machine's his, all right, I guess. Thad ain't paid fer it—all—an' I guess he's got a right to sell it."

"I don't know whom you mean when you say the machine is *his*," cried the girl hotly. "Mrs. Lane told me that your husband had paid all but ten dol-



lars on it, and that makes it yours. What is ten dollars to—to any one in a time of such trouble as you have had? No man can be so lost to all sense of decency!"

She did not see the broad grins that were opening the hard mouths of the men around her. She could not understand just how the attack she had made on the owner of the machine appealed to a rustic sense of humor. But Phil Martin, to whom her clear young voice had carried every word she had spoken, felt a sudden rush of pity for her sweep over him; he in his unkempt, ragged poverty, and she in all the bravery of her position that was so infinitely above him. A flood of hot blood darkened the tan on his face. The hand that held the gold-mounted bridle was clinched in a determination to punish the first laugh that answered her, the first word that might inform her of the blunder she had made.

"There was a contract." Mrs. Weyerrill was answering her. "Oh, yes, there was a contract and—and that's all I know about it." Contracts had never meant anything but misery to her, and her dejected words trailed off into silence. They had been heard only by the girl who stood beside her.

"A contract!" she scoffed. "But nobody would take advantage of a contract at such a time. The meanest man in all the world would give you time to pay for it. There must be a mistake."

Her glance ran over the little crowd, but no eye met hers. When she looked at the sheriff's deputy, who seemed to be the one man in authority, he answered her in a shifty, deprecating voice.

"I guess there ain't no mistake. The contract was broke, all right, when the payment wa'n't made on time, an' I've my orders straight enough to sell."

"But that's impossible," the girl cried again. "You can't sell it. You can't take it away from her. Does the man know—know all that she has been through?"

Jim Harris, agent of the owner of the machine, had been absorbed, for several moments, in the contemplation

of a small white cloud that was drifting across the lower end of the valley. The back of his head had been turned toward the girl. Now, however, he looked toward her, and she recognized him.

"Why, is that you, Mr. Harris?" she exclaimed. "Can't you stop this? Can't you interfere and put an end to this outrageous sale? You know that my father would not allow one of his tenants to be treated in such a manner—by any one."

The little knot of men had moved farther away from the girl and the widow. Jim Harris and the sheriff's deputy alone held their places. For a moment the only answer to her words was a low rumble of rough laughter, but she seemed unconscious of it.

"Something must be done immediately," she cried.

"Well, there ain't nothing I can do."

Jim Harris' tone was surly and held but a faint undertone of respect. The girl's face flushed from white to red. "Business is business and a contract's a contract. There wasn't nothing said in the contract about death lettin' up on the payments. You'd better get on with the sale, Sam," he added to the sheriff's deputy. "We've got more business to attend to this morning."

"Well, there is something that I can do!" The girl's eyes were flashing. The defiance in her voice was directed straight at Harris. "For how much money are you selling this machine?"

"Why, why, I don't know yet," Sam Sturgis answered awkwardly. "They ain't bid much when you—when you druv up."

"Well, what is it worth?" she asked again, an added impatience in her voice.

"Why—it's only wuth what I can get, I suppose." The fellow spoke easily now. A business question could be answered in a business-like way.

The ease of his tone angered the girl still further.

"Is there no common sense in any of you?" she demanded. "I intend to buy this—this machine, myself. Will nobody tell me what I am to pay for it?"

The low rumble of laughter had



broken out into loud guffaws. Phil Martin's face had grown almost black with the blood that surged into it. His hands were twitching, but no one noticed him. No one saw anything but the girl. Every eye was full of curiosity and surprise.

"Is the man who owns the machine here?" she demanded imperiously. "If he is, let him say what he wants for it, and I will pay him."

"It ain't bein' sold that way," volunteered a voice on the outskirts of the crowd. "It's a-goin' to be knocked down to the highest bidder. Ol' Colby'd offered thirty-six dollars and twenty cents fer it jest afore you come."

"Well, is that what I am to pay, then?" the girl asked.

"I was jest a-goin' to say thirty-seven dollars," cried a sheepish voice.

"No, you weren't, Pat Nealon," laughed Jim Harris, a new note of insolence in his voice. "You know you haven't got thirty-seven cents!"

"This ain't business," growled Sam Sturgis, ostentatiously drawing a huge silver watch from his pocket.

"Well, make it business, then." The girl spoke sharply. "That's for you to do. This machine belongs to Mrs. Weverill, and I am going to see that she keeps it. And I am going to see, too, that the money that I pay for it is of very small value to the man who gets it."

She was looking straight at Jim Harris, and the men who heard her were not too dull to read the suspicion that was in her mind. But this only added to the humor that they saw in the situation. Much as they hated Jim Harris, they hated his employer more.

"Get through with it as quick as you can, Sam," ordered Harris.

"Well, what am I offered?" demanded Sturgis, looking from one man to another, ignoring the girl completely. "Did you say thirty-six twenty, Colby? I'm offered thirty-six twenty. What's next? It d'oughter be wuth more'n that to you, Tim, with your strong team o' hosses. Make it forty, can't you?"

"You must say thirty-six thirty,"

whispered a small voice, and the girl in the pink summer gown looked down into two blue ten-year-old Weverill eyes. "Speak quick," the small voice commanded, "er I guess he'll git it."

"Thirty-six thirty," murmured the girl obediently.

"I guess I'll be big enough to run it soon, an' Phil says we kin hire it out till then," whispered the red mouth under the blue eyes.

The girl, because the eyes and mouth seemed the only friendly atoms in all that alien place, took one small grimy hand in hers and drew the little figure closer to her, but her eyes were on Sam Sturgis' face.

"Well, thirty-six thirty," he shouted. "Who's next?"

There was no response save the girl's to his demand for a higher bid, nor could he draw one out.

"Ah, cut it off," exclaimed Jim Harris roughly. "Let it go for that, Sam. She's made a damned farce of it, and the sooner we get out of it the better."

The girl's angry eyes were not the only ones that were turned on the agent, but no voice answered his, and, to the tune of thirty-six dollars and thirty cents, Mrs. Weverill's mower was sold. Barbara had opened a small gold purse that was hanging on a chain that encircled her neck and she was fingering its contents eagerly, but there were only a few pieces of silver in it.

"I guess your word'll do fer the money, miss," Sturgis said awkwardly. "Don't lay it up agin' me, please. Business is business, yo' know, an'—"

Sam Sturgis was dull and did not understand the situation. Jim Harris was clever and did understand just where his own best interest lay. Without a word to any one he had turned away and was waiting outside of the gate for the sheriff's deputy who, at a sharp word of command from the agent, interrupted his stumbling apology and hurried down to the buggy.

The small crowd about the mower had dispersed sheepishly. The widow in her hideous mourning seemed no less dejected than she had been before. She could not see that the situation had been

relieved at all. She did not want the machine, and the measure of help that had been meted out to her seemed so infinitesimally small that she could not discern it. The end, the inevitable end was but put off for a day or two. That was all.

But the ten-year-old Weverill eyes were full of hope. The ten-year-old Weverill fingers were clutching the girl's white gloves. Ten-year-old plans were hurtling over each other through the red lips, although the girl who heard them did not know that she was included in the *we* who were going to accomplish so much in the partnership that had been formed between herself and this ten-year-old heir to a mower.

She was still standing near the widow, her face expressing a dumb, diffident sympathy. She was very young and all unused to sorrow of any kind.

"You will let me help you," she murmured. "Surely there is something that I can do for you."

The woman's lips, that had hung loose in their dejection and misery, grew suddenly hard and firm. Something that this girl could do for her! Was there anything in all the world that any one could do that couldn't be done for her? And this girl, of all the people in the world!

"I will speak to my father as soon as I go back, as soon as I can see him, and find out what he can do." The girl was speaking eagerly now. "Surely you know that he will help you, and please know, too, how much I want to help."

For an instant the woman looked into the girl's clear young eyes. Something of the same pity that had surged through Phil Martin's heart rose in her breast.

"No," she answered wearily. "I guess there ain't nothing you can do. I guess you'll find—I'm mindful, though, o' what ye have done."

With a certain dignity, she turned away and trailed off up the broken steps of the cabin, shielding herself from further interference behind its sagging door.

Barbara, left alone, walked down toward the gate, the small boy still cling-

ing to her hand, still babbling to her. The hot blood that her anger had brought into her cheeks still crimsoned them, but the wrath had fled from her eyes, and the beryl tints of green and gray were but dimly seen under the tears that overlay them.

For the first time, now, she looked at the man whom she had asked to hold her horse, who was still standing at Nick's head.

"Oh, I am so sorry," she cried. "I'd forgotten that Nick was not tied. I—I beg your pardon for keeping you waiting so long and I—I thank you very much."

In a moment more she was gone. Phil Martin stood quite still by the gate where she had left him. Under the barred fence had straggled some vagrant violets, and the ground where she had stood was purple with them. With the fingers she had touched, he gathered a dozen of the flowers.

An hour later he was lying prone upon the ground under a gaunt and twisted pine. The violets were still in his hand. In that hour he had dreamed sweet dreams, but now he had awakened to a white reality. She was the daughter of Prime, the county magnate, of Prime, who owned, as one of the least of his possessions, all the land on either side of the Cayucos; and he was only Philomel, the son of half-witted Theodore Martin, one of Prime's poorest tenants. And greater than any difference in station, greater than any inequality of worldly wealth, he knew that there was a possibility that between him and this girl there might be a barrier that no power in earth or heaven could break down.

Something warm crept slowly down his cheeks and dropped unheeded on the brown pine needles. His reveries were disturbed by bitter sobs, and he knew that, however his heart might be shaken, he was not sobbing audibly. Turning his head he saw the ten-year-old Weverill heir couched on the ground beside him. Over the dirty brown cheeks tears were coursing. The small chest under the ragged gingham blouse was heaving visibly.

"I don't believe that she was real at all, do you?" the red lips murmured in answer to the turned head and the observant eyes. "I don't guess we'll never see her again, do you?"

## CHAPTER II.

To herself, Barbara Prime seemed a very real, a very living factor in a real and living world as she drove down the long river road. It was a world, too, upon which her eyes had been opened suddenly. She was the only child of David Prime, the richest man in the county over which he held a sway that was almost absolute, one of the richest men in the State; and she had lived a life apart from all the tragedies to which most human creatures are early accustomed. She had no memory whatsoever of the mother who had died when she was still an infant. She had hardly heard of the brothers who had preceded her advent into the world and spent, each, but a few short years therein.

For Barbara had been an accidental happening, as it were, in the lives of her parents. Her childhood had been spent in the rambling house overlooking the village, in the wide-spreading garden that surrounded it, on the cliffs that held it perched above the sea, on the hills that terraced themselves back to the forest-fringed horizon. She had passed from the hands of a nurse into those of an English governess; and from the latter lady's charge, under her chaperonage, indeed, she had been dispatched to the most fashionable finishing school in an Eastern metropolis.

About her father she knew little except that he was immensely rich and that he had always been absorbed in his business. Personally, she knew him less well than she knew the cashier at the bank who honored the checks sent her by her father. And it was some innate desire to see him, to know him, to have some vital and definite relation with this human creature so close to her, that had brought her home, now, in direct opposition to his wishes and desires, written and telegraphed.

She had been at home for little more than a week, and already she was wondering if she would ever gain the thing for which she had come. Her father had met her with a few formal words of greeting and had asked her what he could do for her. In her ears, the words sounded as cold and business-like as the same question had often sounded when Mr. Gregory, the cashier at the bank, had asked it. He had suggested that she might like to have a new cart and harness for Nick, the horse she had driven before she left home. He had told her that if there was anything needed about the house for her comfort or convenience she should let him know.

He had breakfasted with her once, had dined with her not quite half a dozen times. His days had been occupied with business. Every evening he had absented himself from the house on some plea of engagement or a business meeting. No opportunity had been given her to break through the wall that held them apart.

In the isolation of the big, empty house, in the isolation of the sweet, neglected garden, in the isolation of the white cliffs, she had pondered over the matter for seven long days. On this, the afternoon of the Weverill sale, she had driven up the river road to see her old nurse, half intending to ask the woman to come back and live with her, half intending to ask the woman to tell her something about her father, something about the mother she could not remember, something, anything that would help her to reach out to him, help her to draw him up or down or back to her. Underlying these divided intentions was an almost wholly formed resolve to tell her father, immediately, that very night, that she would not, could not stay at home, that she wanted to go back to New York as soon as he could send her back.

Mrs. Lane welcomed her warmly, fondled her and comforted her as only an Irish nurse can fondle and comfort the child she has fostered and cared for. Then she had poured into her ears the tale of Mrs. Weverill's woe, remembering just before the words slipped from

her lips that Barbara Prime must not know that David Prime, her father, was the cause, the instigator, not only of the tragedy that was being then enacted in front of Mrs. Weverill's cabin, but of nearly all the woes and miseries of the Weverills, of all the wretched dwellers in the Cayucos district. The girl understood only that some one—a name seemed quite unnecessary—had done this cruel and brutal thing. Cruelty and brutality had fallen on ears all unused to them; and, forgetful of herself, she had rushed to the rescue.

Only now, on the homeward drive, did she realize that she had not asked the name of the man who was responsible for the misery and suffering that she had seen. Determined as she was to carry the story straight to her father's ears, to demand assistance for the Weverills, to demand vengeance of some kind on the man who had behaved in so dastardly a manner, she wished that she had made more definite inquiries regarding him. Of course, Jim Harris would know his name. At the thought of that agent of her father's, her cheeks flamed again and her eyes flashed. Overmastering her determination to demand vengeance upon Mrs. Weverill's enemy, a desire to have Jim Harris punished for his treatment of her asserted itself.

The road dipped to the level of the creek bed, slipped under the dancing shadows of the overhanging willows and out upon the other side. Suddenly mindful of an old habit, she drew rein in the middle of the stream and let Nick drink long swishing draughts of the clear water. Sitting there in the flickering shadows, she remembered that she might have asked the—the boy—the man who had held her horse for the name of the owner of the mower. Very vivid in her mind was the picture of the brown eyes that had looked into hers. Clear and distinct as though they were actually present before her, she saw the straight, well-cut nose, the firm, sharply chiseled lips and square chin. A rippling lilt of laughter was caught and held in the running music of the stream.

"I don't even know *his* name!" She spoke aloud. "But he was awfully good-looking and—it's too early for any one to be camping—I wonder what he can be doing up here!"

### CHAPTER III.

While she sat in her cart waiting for the man to come and take the horse, Barbara Prime looked about her at the garden that had been, as it seemed to her, old and neglected even when she had played there as a child; at the honeysuckle-covered arbor where, as Annie, the nurse, had told her, her mother had loved to spend her days; at the corner, densely grown now with hollyhocks which her mother had planted; at the great lemon verbena, a straggling monster that had been sent, a slip of a thing in a letter, from her mother's old home in Vermont; at the hawthorn trees, rose-red and snow-white, that held their heads level with the closed shutters of the room that had been her mother's room. For the first time since she had been at home, the garden appealed to her. With a newly awakened sympathy, she divined something of the woman who had lived there in that garden, who had there borne the joys and sorrows of life, who had died in that room with the closed shutters. In the divination she realized, too, a new and sudden need for mother love, mother understanding and mother fellowship.

But the idea, even as it presented itself to her, brought her back to the errand upon which she was bent. Hurrying down the steep flight of steps that led to the village, she threaded the twisting lanes that brought her out to the main street. At the corner of the street, the name, David Prime, confronted her, huge white letters on a wide plate-glass window behind which a dingy yellow shade was drawn half-way down. She laid her hand on the brass knob of the door with as much diffidence as though the man she expected to see was an absolute stranger to her.

The room, huge, desolate, and bare,

was empty save for a clerk who sat comparatively near the door at a table littered with papers, clicking off letters on a rattling typewriter. During the moment that Barbara stood in the doorway, he did not raise his eyes from his work.

"Well, come in and shut the door or else stay out," he snapped.

"I want to see Mr. Prime, my father."

Barbara entered now; but she held the door wide open, for the stale odor of tobacco that swept over her seemed to suffocate her.

The clerk raised his head, and the same pink vision confronted him that Phil Martin had seen, but the eyes that looked upon it now were the ordinary eyes of commerce and saw neither dreams nor romance.

"Well, Mr. Prime ain't here." The man's voice was toned by the same lack of respect that had angered the girl when Jim Harris had addressed her.

"But this is his office?" Her eyes turned from the white letters on the window to the roll-top desk and swivel chair that stood in a corner. "He is always here in the afternoon, is he not?"

"It's his office, all right," the man returned, "and he's here sometimes, but he ain't here now."

"Will he be here soon? Would it be worth my while to wait?" She looked about the room searching for a chair that might be an inanimate evidence of the hospitality she failed to see in the clerk's face.

"Nop, it wouldn't," he answered, returning to his work. "When he went out he said he wouldn't be back again to-day."

Barbara Prime went out into the street and closed the door with no stronger feeling in her mind than a certain curiosity concerning the lack of courtesy that was shown to her by her father's employees, for she could not divine in any possible way that this clerk had been obeying not only the letter but the spirit of the command, given to him by David Prime some

half hour before, to tell her if she came into the office that he was not there and would not be there however long she might wait.

Behind the low partition wall which Barbara's eyes had failed to note, two men held their breaths and waited in absolute silence until she had closed the office door.

"What in hell did you let her come home for?" It was Jim Harris who asked the question. He was standing at one end of the long table before which David Prime sat, slouched down into a worn leather chair. "I told you there'd be the devil to pay if she came."

David Prime, man of many millions, owner of more fertile acres, worker of richer mines and deeper quarries, controller of wider moneyed interests than any other man in the county, might, from his appearance, have been one of his own most impoverished tenants. A single button held a frayed and rusty frock coat fastened across his narrow chest. Below this the huge paunch of his stomach protruded. His shirt was crumpled, his cuffs worn and brown with dirt. From one corner of his lips sagged a half-smoked, lifeless cigar. Under heavy, lowering brows hung eyes that were gray and hard as the rocks of his own quarries. Yet, gray and hard as they were, in their depths there lurked something that no man had ever read aright. Few men, indeed, had seen it, but Jim Harris had and had pondered over it, had even taken certain steps to discover its cause. He was watching for it now. Sometimes it had seemed to him that the mention of Prime's daughter had brought it there. But Prime's lids were lowered. His eyes were, apparently, bent on the corner of the paper that his nervous fingers were folding over and creasing down, then unfolding and smoothing out.

"What business is it of yours whether she's home or not?" he demanded now.

"It's my business if she interferes with me," the agent answered. "And I guess it's your business if she finds



out—what she's like to find out if she goes moseying about among those Cayucos people. Yo'd oughter've seen her and heard her when she was talkin' about the man who owned that mower. Yo'd 'a' thought it was your business not to let her find out it was you that owned it, I guess."

"You're sure she didn't know?" demanded Prime, his interest in the question quite apparent in his voice. "You're sure she had no suspicion?"

"She hadn't when I left," answered Harris. "What those hoboos may 'a' told her afterward, I don't know. They all hate you worse'n death, and I guess they'd be glad enough to tell her or any one if they thought it'd harm you. Phil Martin was holdin' her horse. He may 'a' told her before she drove away."

Prime's lids were lifted for a moment, and Jim Harris' patient watching was rewarded. The rift in the granite was plainly visible, but only for an instant. Then the figure in the leather chair bent forward. The eyes and fingers again occupied themselves with the papers on the table.

"Did you give the Weverill woman notice to quit?" The landowner's tone was once more curt and crisp.

"Nop! You wouldn't 'a' had me give her notice with that girl lookin' on! You'll take my advice and keep your hands off those people up there until you can get rid o' her!"

"I pay you to obey orders, Jim Harris, not to give me advice." David Prime had quite recovered his ordinary domineering manner. "And you'll tell Mrs. Weverill that her interest is two weeks overdue. If she can't pay it, she knows the terms of her contract and she'll get off my property as quick as she can. Did you tell Sylva I wouldn't give him that right of way through the Graham pasture land?"

"No, I didn't see Sylva." To the note of resentment in Harris' voice was added a touch of sullenness.

"Well, you needn't," continued the magnate. "Sylva was here this morning and he said that his boys were doing a fine job on the road, the part

that leads up to the Graham boundary. He needn't be told that he can't have the right of way until they get the work done, see? We may want to open the road, ourselves, some day; and there'll be no harm in having the work done for us. He said his oldest boy had a chance to get a job up the coast, but I advised him to keep him at home."

"Did he pay you the interest?" questioned Harris. In return for the ungracious reference to his advice he withheld any comment on his employer's clever stroke of business.

"No, he said he couldn't. The place'll be more valuable, though, when he gets that road cut—the grades are pretty bad—and we'll take it then. It's one of the best pieces of land in the district."

"That land o' the Martins' is a damn sight better," argued Harris. If he had been looking at Prime when he spoke, he would have again seen the curious light under the sombre, gray eyes. "Why you keep those Martins on, I can't see. Phil's the laziest hobo in the country, and his doddering old father'd oughter be in an asylum."

"I——"

At this instant the street door of the outer office was opened again and Barbara's voice was heard asking for a pencil and paper. She added in courteous explanation to the uncourteous clerk that she wanted to leave a note for her father in case he did come in. For five minutes there was absolute silence in both rooms, and then Barbara spoke again.

"Be sure to remember to give it to him, won't you? It is—a business matter that must be attended to at once."

The outer door closed and, with no prefatory knock, the clerk entered the inner sanctum and handed the note to Prime.

Taking it from its envelope, Barbara's father read as follows:

Just to ask you to give Mr. Harris thirty-six dollars and thirty cents for me. It is to pay for a machine of some kind that I bought this afternoon. I will tell you the whole story to-night. It is perfectly horrible, but Mr. Harris knows about it and he

will know to whom he is to give the money. The man is so vile and so contemptible that there is no telling what he will do if he is not paid at once. Yours, BARBARA.

For an instant the old man sat in silence. Tearing the paper to bits, he said:

"That will be all for to-day."

Harris, accepting his dismissal, left the room and shut Barbara's father in alone with the pen picture, roughly drawn, it is true, and torn to bits, but quite clear enough, quite distinct enough to give food for thought.

#### CHAPTER IV.

While Barbara dressed for dinner that night, her mind was occupied with a trinity of interests entirely new to her; the mother life that had been lived there in that house, the tragedy into which she had been thrust that afternoon, and the man who had looked at her but who had spoken no single word to her; a trinity that resolved itself into a single alert interest in the life immediately about her. Not for a single second, even, did she remember her half-formed intention of returning to New York.

When she went downstairs, the maid informed her that Mr. Prime had sent word that he would not be at home. So Barbara ate her dinner alone and spent the evening alone. She tried to read, but the story which she had commenced the night before seemed dead and lifeless in comparison with the pathetic tale of Mrs. Weverill and her woes. She began a letter to a friend at the school in New York, but the only item of news in the letter was the fact that she had met a man, rather, that she had seen a man a million times better looking than any one she had ever laid her eyes on before. And at this point she dropped her pen, even as she had flung aside her music and her book.

"I wonder who and what he is," she mused. "He looked like a tramp. I wish he had spoken to me. It's so easy to know what people are like if only you can hear their voices."

All night long it rained and late into the morning. David Prime had gone up to town on the morning train, so the maid reported, and added that he had not said when he would return, but that he often stayed away several days at a time. Barbara, left alone again, tried to occupy herself as she had the evening before, tried to find some amusement in wandering over the house, in planning changes here and there; but nothing would divert her thoughts, and at last, acting as always upon the impulse of the moment, she ordered her horse and dressed to go out.

She had already closed the front door behind her when a new idea occurred to her. Going back into the house, she picked up a flower basket that was lying on a table in the hall, and went into the kitchen.

"I want something—I don't know just what it is, though," she said to the cook. "What have we got that would be nice to take up to a sick woman and some children? There are some jellies, aren't there? I suppose I couldn't take soup very well, could I? But you might put in a loaf or two of that bread you baked yesterday and, oh, yes, some of those cookies."

She held the basket out, but the woman's red arms rested quietly akimbo on her hips.

"Shure, yer father lets nothing be given out from the house, miss," she answered. "Thim was my fir-st orders on comin' here, an' I dassen't disobey 'em."

"But surely, now that I am at home," Barbara began, amazement in eyes and voice.

"Ye'll have to ast him an' git his consent," the woman answered. "Me place wouldn't be wor-ruth a crust o' bread an' I wint agin' his orders."

Barbara looked at her for a moment. Then, unwilling to argue where she felt that she had the right to command, she turned away.

"Well, I will see him about the matter when he returns," she said, "but I am quite sure, Nora, that you will find that your place depends upon your



obedience to me. Do we still get our groceries at Belcher and Armstrong's?"

"It's sorry I am, miss," Nora began, "but if yez knew——"

"I don't care to discuss the matter. Where do we get our groceries? At Belcher's?"

The woman's affirmative answer coincided, almost, with the closing of the door. Barbara threw her basket into the cart, drove to the village, and had it filled with things that seemed suitable to her. But as she lifted it from the counter, the man who had served her held a slip of paper out to her.

"If you please, Miss Prime," he asked, "would you mind okaying this bill? Mr. Prime is—very particular about his account here, and—I'd rather not have any trouble about it."

Again a wave of astonishment flashed across the girl's face, but she signed the slip.

"I am sorry that I haven't the money to pay you," she answered, "but, of course, it will be all right."

As she stepped into her cart, she determined that she would lose no time in demanding from her father that he should make her position known not only in his own house but also in the village. She turned into the river road.

Long before she had reached the upper levels of the hills, the rain had stopped. Through the overarching branches of the trees, she caught glimpses of blue sky. The creek, swollen with the night's rain, sang lustily under its bank or sprawled out over the roots of its hedging willows, across the driveway, bubbling up to the fern-covered bank above.

Splashing through the water that rose almost to his knees, Nick demanded all of his driver's attention. Not until she was almost within sight of the Weverill cabin could she pay much heed to her surroundings. As she drew rein at the spot where Nick had stood so long the day before, she realized that the place looked even more deserted, more woe-begone than it had seemed then.

Barbara could see no sign of life about the place, and she was wonder-

ing vaguely if it really were the Weverill cabin when her eyes fell upon the ungainly machine that still stood just where it had been when she had purchased it. Lying on the ground, both hands clasped about the spoke of one of the wheels, she saw the oldest of Mrs. Weverill's children. That he could be asleep there on the wet ground did not seem possible, but he did not move until she had called him twice. Then he sat up slowly, loosed his hold on the wheel, and dug his fists deep into his eyes beneath which she could see the ruts of stormy tears that had made their way through the grime on his cheeks. She called to him again and, this time, he looked up and saw her.

"Oh, you've come, you've come!" he shouted. Racing down to the fence and slipping under it, he flung himself at her cart. "I—I thought you was never coming again."

"But where is your mother?" she demanded. "And what on earth are you doing there on that wet ground?"

The tears started afresh down the well-worn tracks.

"Oh, she's gone," the boy sobbed.

"Gone! What do you mean?" Absorbed as she had been in the little tragedy, occupied with its details as they had appeared to her, she still felt awkward and diffident now when she was face to face with this atom of it. The boy stood with his elbows crossed against the wheel, his face buried in them, his whole little body shaken with dull sobs. "Won't you tell me—won't you stop crying and tell me where your mother is—where she has gone?"

"Oh, she's only now down to Mis' Cullen's to leave the baby an' some o' the things, but she's got to go ferever! *He* come up this mornin' an' tole her to go, an' *he* says the mower ain't mine an' you had no right to buy it, an' it ain't yourn an' I can't have it, an' Phil says it *is* mine an' I can hire it out nex' summer even if I ain't big enough to run it, an' *he* says we can't stay here till nex' summer an' *he's* goin' to take the mower away, an' Phil says he can't help us, that he can't have even me

stay with him, an' Mis' Cullen says she can't keep us long an'—"

"Oh, wait, wait, please wait!" cried Barbara in dismay. "I don't know what you mean. I don't understand. Who came this morning?"

The blue eyes under the red shock of hair looked up at her in surprise.

"Why, the man who was here yistiddy. Jim Harris. Don't you know Jim Harris?"

"Yes, but what has he to do with it? Why did he come again? I don't see—isn't this your mother's place?" She looked around in despair at the empty cabin, at the unploughed fields, at the gay little patch of apple bloom. "I don't understand at all," she added again.

"Well, Phil kin tell you," the boy cried anxiously. "Phil kin eggspain it to you. He said he'd eggspain it to me when I got bigger."

"Phil? But, who is Phil?" As she asked the question she knew that her cheeks had grown hot with a heat that did not come from the sun.

"Why, Phil Martin," echoed the boy in surprise. "He's the one that held your horse yistiddy, don't yer remember? An' I seen him after you'd gone an' tol' him I didn't b'lieve you was real an' he said you was—you was the realest thing in all the world."

Again the hot blood rushed into Barbara's cheeks.

"Does he live here? Near here?" she asked.

"Why, yes." By this time, the boy's tears had been driven from his eyes by his surprise. "Phil, Phil Martin—don't you know—lives on up the road, next the Graham pasture. His father's loony. Ain't you ever seen Phil Martin's father? He ain't got any sense at all. He don't know half as much as I do, an' he can't do more'n half as much. Phil's got some chickens and some pigeons. You jest go on up 'bout a mile an' you'll see Phil an' he'll tell you." Once more the eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, don't cry, laddie, dear," Barbara exclaimed. "Come up here and we'll go together to Mr. Martin's."

But all the time that she was speaking she was wondering what manner of man this might be who lived in this dreary place with a father who was evidently imbecile, who was familiarly known as *Phil* to a ragged little pauper like this Weverill child, and who had occupied her thoughts for nearly all of twenty-four hours. The blood was running hotter than ever in her cheeks as she turned the wheel slightly so that the boy might climb into the cart.

"Come on up, boy."

"Nop, I can't," he answered between his sobs, "I tol' marg'n I'd stay here, an' anyways I'm not a-goin' to let him take my mower whenever he comes for it. But you go on to Phil's an' then you stop an' tell me if he don't say it's yourn and mine an' not his'n at all."

She had spoken to Nick and was driving on, when she stopped again.

"I don't know your name," she called back.

"My name," the boy shouted after her, "is Thad Weverill, an' he's Phil Martin."

## CHAPTER V.

In the whole course of his life Nick had never walked more slowly than he did over the mile of road that lay between the Thad Weverill cabin and Phil Martin's home. With every step he took, it seemed to him that his mistress was about to pull him up, to turn him round. Not until they had reached the outer boundary of the Martin land did she gather the lines up and, emerging from her own perplexity, bring Nick out of his. No sooner, though, had he started off with his long strides to make up for lost time than she drew him up short once more. He could not see, as she did, the man who had sprung up from the lower step of the cabin and who was coming quickly toward them.

Barbara tried not to see the forlorn little cabin standing, tip-tilted, against the first bank of the hill that rose in slow terraces up to the fir-crested summit. She tried not to see the shabby outbuildings that clustered at the side of the cabin, the bent and shambling

figure at work on the hillside near the house. She tried hardest of all not to see the yellow thatch of hair above the sunburned face, the clear brown eyes of the man who was coming toward her. Her heart and face were full of scorn, not for the faded overalls he wore, although she saw them plainly enough, not for the ragged shirt that was turned back from his sunburned throat, but scorn for herself, Barbara Prime, that she should have given a thought to a creature so poor, so common, so different from anything in her own life.

"You are Philip Martin?" The words were spoken crisply, curtly.

The man had swung through the gate that sagged from worn leathern hinges, and was standing with one hand almost familiarly placed on the rim of the wheel. Barbara resented the familiarity even as she resented the whole appearance of the man and his surroundings. She turned her eyes, coldly green as an ice shadow, away from him.

A curious smile parted his lips

"No, my name is——"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, then." Barbara interrupted in the same crisp voice. "I have made a mistake." She drew the reins up, and Nick took one forward step. "The Weverill child told me——"

The man's hand held the wheel. Nick stopped again.

"Thad told you my name was Phil Martin. It is Philomel, not Philip."

She looked at him quickly. "How very——"

"How very curious?" He finished her sentence. "How very droll—were you going to say? I suppose the name is curious. It is unusual. But I—I have a certain pride in it because my mother chose it, because she gave it to me; and, too, I wanted you to know it."

She recognized the same intimate familiarity in the words that she saw in the hand on the wheel, but now she felt no resentment. The man's voice had arrested her attention and held it. It was different from any-

thing that she had heard before, round and full and low.

Impulsive in her speech as in her actions, grasping at any chance of escape from the self-humiliation she had endured, she exclaimed:

"But you have not lived here long!"

The same curious smile that she had noticed before slipped across his lips just ahead of his answering words.

"I have lived here always; always, that is, since I can remember. My mother brought me here when I was only a few years old."

Barbara gaped again for some relief from one of the horrors she had heard of, from the horror she saw now crouching on the hillside staring at her.

"Your father, then——" She could not speak the words.

"She brought my father with her, when she brought me," Phil Martin answered. Barbara could not fail to hear the note of tenderness that underlay the words. "She brought him, almost as helpless, almost as useless to aid her, as I was."

The eyes into which he looked softened suddenly and, for an instant, were veiled by a mist of tears under which he saw the beryl tints that he had noted the day before.

"Like the inshore green of the sea," he thought, and wondered where he had read the line.

Barbara's lips, for no other reason than to still their trembling, were smiling at him.

"I—I beg your pardon," she murmured, half unconscious, herself, of the thing for which she demanded pardon, wholly conscious that he could not know. "But I—I came to ask you about Mrs. Weverill. I came up to see her. Thad told me that she had gone, that some one had told her that she must leave her place, and I did not understand. Thad told me that you would explain. The place is hers? Who can send her off from it now?"

As the man looked at her, he was conscious again of the sudden pity for her that had surged through him the day before. She did not know! Of course, she could not know! A deter-

mination to withhold the knowledge from her took possession of him.

"No, Mrs. Weverill does not own the place," he answered slowly. "Her husband had not bought it and, of course, she cannot take care of it. I suppose the—agent told her this morning that some one would have to be put on it who could attend to it, and she may have realized that there was work to be done at once—the work on a farm must be done in the spring, you know—so, she is planning to go at once."

"But, how absurd!" cried Barbara. "She has nowhere to go! At least, she could live there. She could stay there, even if some one did the work for her. Some one could help her, my father could help her. Besides, Mr. Weverill *must* have bought the place. Annie Lane told me yesterday that the Weverills had been living there for ten years. Of course he would have paid for a little place like that in ten years. It can't be worth—why, anything, really. How long did it take to pay for this place?"

"This place is not paid for, yet." Martin answered her question, but the words were spoken absently. He was wondering if, indeed, the knowledge of her father's business methods could be withheld from her.

"Not paid for," she echoed curiously, "but you said—"

"I said I had lived here all my life? Yes, I have lived here for twenty years and more, but my mother died when I was eight years old, and we—my father and I—have not paid anything on it since then. You see, it is all a—a form of business. I imagine that you do not know much about business, do you?" He waited for her answer, and it came quickly.

"No, of course, I don't! I have never been interested in it, at all. But my father—every one admits that he is a wonderfully clever business man—and he must understand."

There was a note of relief in Martin's voice when he spoke again.

"Of course, he understands the matter thoroughly and, of course, as you

say, it doesn't interest you. There is no reason why you should be worried with that part of it, either."

"Not worried, no, but I want to understand it so that I can tell him about it, don't you see? I couldn't tell him, last night, about that—that—"

"Mower," Martin supplied the unfamiliar word.

"Yes, that mower that I bought, because he was not at home; and he is still away, but as soon as he comes back I want to see what he can do. He cannot know about Mrs. Weverill and—and—perhaps Mr. Harris is—oh, sometimes agents are not—not honest, you know, and my father may not have given his personal attention to these small places. And Thad said, too, that the man—I suppose, now, that he meant Mr. Harris—had said that I had no right to buy the machine and that it wasn't mine. Don't you see how curious it all is? I wish my father were not away. He may be away for several days, and then it will be too late to do anything for Mrs. Weverill. Some one must help her, and at once, and I think that she ought to stay on the place where she has lived so long."

"Some one will help her." The man's voice soothed her. "There is always some one to help at such a time, even in a place like this. She will stay with Mrs. Cullen for a time. The neighbors will take the children. I would like to have Thad here with me, but my father—it would not be best—my father does not like to have any one, even a child, on the place."

Barbara's eyes that, in her perplexity, had been fixed on his face, questioning his eyes, his lips, were now raised to the hill, to the place where she had seen the queer grotesque figure at work; but it was no longer there, and she saw that it had come halfway up the path between the cabin and the road. She heard a querulous voice calling:

"Phil, oh, Phil!"

The man standing by Barbara's cart turned, a faint flush of red blood showing through the sunburn on his face.

"Yes, father," he answered in the

same voice that had soothed Barbara's complaint a moment before.

"Come, Phil, come," the quavering voice commanded, and always the figure shambled nearer.

"I am coming," the son answered.

"But come, at once, please. Oh, Phil, please come. I want to show you all the little tunnels I have made and I want you to see the water running in them before it is all gone." The figure had reached the gate.

Barbara's hands clasped the lines that had been hanging loose. A look of terror sprang into her eyes. Phil saw it and answered it.

"Don't be frightened, please. He is quite harmless. He never hurt any one in all his life, but he wants me and I must go."

With a courage born of the appeal in his voice, Barbara smiled back at him, smiled down into the senseless eyes of the idiotic creature who was staring at her.

"I don't want her here, Phil," the father wavered, catching his son's hand in his and trying to draw him away. "I don't want to see her. Come! Come away with me!"

"In just a moment," Phil answered, "and, please, Miss Prime, don't worry about Mrs. Weverill, don't bother your father with the matter. There is nothing—nothing wrong—nothing that you can do, anyway. Won't you promise me that you will not be troubled by it, that you will not—will not speak to your father about it?" He waited for an answer, but she offered none. "Can't you promise?" She did not speak, but shook her head slowly. His right hand still rested on the cart. His eyes still held hers. "Good-by, then."

Again acting on the impulse that seized her, she held her hand out to him.

"Good-by, and you will let me know if I can do anything, won't you? You will let me know what I can do?"

For an instant her hand lay in his, but she turned her head away suddenly. The movement was not so quick, however, that he did not see again the

shining beryl tints under the salt wave of tears that covered them.

"I don't like people, Phil," she heard the old man say. "I don't want you to have people here, Phil."

The April-tinted world moved mistily past her as she drove down the road. Straight past the Weverill cabin she would have gone had she not been stopped by a shrill voice calling to her. Through the same mist, she saw the blue Weverill eyes looking up at her, and the wide bunch of short-stemmed violets the child was reaching up to her.

"Did Phil eggsplain?" Thad demanded. "Is the mower mine an' yourn?"

"It's yours, yours, all yours," she answered, realizing only then how little Phil Martin had really explained to her, how much more inexplicable, in truth, the situation was. She realized, too, how definitely fixed was her own determination, in spite of Phil Martin's words, to unravel the mystery, to demand its solution from her father. "Yes, child, the mower is yours," she answered again. As she looked down into the blue eyes she saw a new shyness enter them and she waited for a moment more.

"I—I guess I don't know your name," the boy said softly.

"My name," she echoed in surprise. "Why, I am Barbara Prime. My name is Prime."

"But that is *his* name." The voice shrank from her, even as the lad's shriveled figure shrank from her. Nick, startled by the loud, crashing fall of a tree far up on the hillside, jumped suddenly to one side and plunged, racing with an imaginary terror, down the river road. Had he stood but a moment longer, Barbara Prime might have heard from the childish lips the knowledge that Phil Martin had withheld from her.

## CHAPTER VI.

There was nothing extraordinary in the fact that David Prime, the tattered shreds of his daughter's note still in his fingers, should have found it impossible



to face her at dinner. It was not especially strange that he should have chosen a trip to town in preference to an encounter with her, although any one of his acquaintances would have seen an element of absurdity in his flight from a girl of eighteen and her possible judgment of him. The words she had used in her condemnation of the owner of the mower were so mild in comparison with the terms of abuse, the epithets and anathemas that had been showered upon him for thirty years and more, that any one would have been justified in the belief that they would slip from him absolutely unnoticed. The sting of the words lay, not in their strength, but in the fact that they had been written by his own child, by a bit of his own flesh and blood, part and parcel of himself as it were.

Of David Prime, of his antecedents, of his past, of the foundation of his vast fortune, no man knew anything. No man knew him intimately, no man called him friend. Of the thousands of human beings who had encountered him in business, crossed his will and emerged, broken and defeated in the contest, there was no man, either, who did not recognize in him a sinister power, an infamous faculty, an infernal skill in forcing every enterprise to his own end.

That night when Barbara heard that her father had come home, that he would be at home for dinner, she tried to turn her thoughts to the inquiries she wished to make, to the story she had to tell, to her appeal for Mrs. Weverill; but always the image of Phil Martin stood clear in her vision, always the sound of his voice rang in her ears. Every hour that had elapsed since her interview with him she had devoted to thoughts of him. She had wondered who and what he was, where he had learned the refinements of voice and speech. She had thrilled again to the tones of his voice, had yielded again to his words. She realized the power he held over her and, at the same instant, hotly demanded of herself why she yielded to it.

Not until she sat down at the dinner

table could she shape the words she desired to speak. David Prime, at the head of his own table, bore no special resemblance to the man who had slouched in the old leathern chair behind the desk in the private office. He was freshly shaved, his linen was immaculate, his coat, made expressly for him, concealed some of the ungainly lines of his ill-shaped figure. Only the granite gray eyes were the same, the eyes, and the hard inflexible lines of the mouth. In these Barbara recognized a challenge even before she had spoken a word. She resented this, and her first sentence was toned with a vigor that, as she heard it, seemed wholly unnecessary. After all, she told herself, she had but to make a simple statement, to ask half a dozen questions.

"I must tell you about a woman I saw yesterday for the first time up in the Cayucos Cañon. You got my note?"

Prime waited a moment before he spoke.

"Yes," he answered then, "but I will not talk business while I am eating dinner."

The lips parleyed, but it seemed to her that the eyes had already answered her, had answered all her questions and her appeal. But she could not understand how or why.

"You will be at home to-night? You will let me speak to you to-night?" She was pleading with him! She hated the sound in her own voice.

"Yes, I am staying at home to talk to you, to explain a few things to you." His lips clicked over the final word.

For a few moments Barbara was silent. Then, she spoke again.

"Do you know the Martins, up there, know them personally, I mean?"

"I told you I would not discuss business at the table," he answered sharply.

"I thought that you might know something about the Martins—outside of business," Barbara returned. "I saw Mr. Martin—the son—yesterday and to-day, and he—they seem so different in some way from the other people up there."

"Well, they are no different," David

Prime answered quickly. "They are tenants of mine, and very poor ones at that."

This time his answer shut the girl into a silence that held her fast until the meal was at an end, until they had crossed the hall, until the man had seated himself, slouching in a wide-armed chair, until he had lit his cigar.

"Will you talk to me now?" she asked. Again she was amazed at the hostility in her own voice. "I want to know some things. I want to understand some things."

"If you've any questions to ask, ask them," her father answered. "But I'll tell you now, once and for the first and last time, that I will not have you interfering in business matters you've nothing to do with. The information may save you some breath. Jim Harris gave me an account of your actions yesterday."

"Jim Harris!" The name slipped from Barbara's scornful lips.

"Yes, Jim Harris," Prime repeated, "my agent and the man I pay to attend to my affairs."

"He was not attending to your affairs when I saw him," she cried impatiently. Already, it seemed that she was embroiling herself over an outside issue. "My actions!" She repeated her father's words. "Did he tell you of the outrageous, infamous sale in which I—I interfered—as you call it? Of the horrible condition of affairs at Mrs. Weverill's? She is one of your tenants, isn't she? His business should have been to protect her! Did he tell you about the wretched, vile man who had defrauded her, who had stolen from her a thing that was hers, that her husband had bought and paid for—all except a miserable little ten dollars? I was interfering as much for your sake and your name as for anything else. Did Jim Harris tell you anything of all that?"

Her father did not answer her question. He asked another.

"Who told you about Mrs. Weverill—in the first place?"

"Annie Lane." The girl was not looking at her father and did not see

the straight line of his lips grow straighter, narrower. Hiram Lane was one of the few men in the Cayucos district who had bought and paid for his land, who owed no cent of money to the owner of the Cayucos Cañon, who, therefore, for the moment was not in his power. "I had gone up to see her—the first time since I have been at home—and she was full of this terrible trouble that had come to her neighbor. Mrs. Weverill's husband has just died. She has a baby not more than a month old and half a dozen other children."

"What business is it of mine how many children the woman has?" he questioned roughly.

"But, father!" Barbara, who had been moving restlessly about the room, stopped in front of the big chair and looked down upon the man who sat slouched in its depths. "Why are you so—so angry? Surely you are not angry with me! Don't you care—don't you want to know about the people up there?"

"I want to know if they can pay me the money they owe me, and nothing else," he returned. "Nothing else about them concerns me in the least. Why should I care how many brats they breed and raise? I'm not responsible for them. You women, when you interfere in a man's business, see only the mawkish sentimentality in the lives of those people."

When Barbara spoke again, there was a little note of conciliation in her voice.

"Of course, I know that you are too busy to consider all the small details, but I wondered—I thought——"

"You thought and you think that I don't know how to manage my own affairs and my own property." Prime had neither heard nor heeded the conciliation. His own voice was as rasping as it had been before. "You thought and you think that you can instruct me. As I told you in the beginning, I will not have you interfering in any way with my affairs. I will not have you going about the country prying into my business, listening to every



worthless complaint that any worthless wretch chooses to make against me."

"Prying! Complaint!" The line of Barbara's scarlet lips grew straight as David Prime's own lips. The gray of her eyes matched the granite in his. "I don't understand you in the least. I started, a moment ago, to say that I wondered if you knew how your agent was managing your affairs. I thought that it was impossible that you could know. Phil Martin said——"

The name seemed to drive David Prime into a frenzy of rage.

"I won't hear a word the fellow said!" he cried. "I forbid you to mention his name even. I forbid you even to speak to him again. Do you hear me and do you understand? I tell you now and you may as well understand now that I have always and will always manage my affairs in my own fashion with no let or hindrance from any petticoat. Your mother understood it before you, and I guess you can be made to. Jim Harris told me enough about the Weverill rumpus to let me see just how big a fool you made of yourself. He told me, too, how every man Jack on the place was laughing at you."

Barbara, remembering for the first time the rough laughter that had greeted her ears, felt the crimson blood sweep across her cheeks.

"I tell you you are a fool, Barbara," Prime continued. "That mower was mine." He gave no heed to the sharp cry that escaped from Barbara's lips. "I had sold it to Weverill according to a definite contract. That contract had no clause exempting him from payment in case of death or the superfluous breeding of brats. He had not fulfilled his agreement to pay for it. In accordance with the definite terms of the contract the mower reverted to me. It was mine, absolutely mine; and every man on the place knew that it was mine. You, in your ignorance and foolishness, stood there and blackguarded the man who owned it, blackguarded your own father, and offered to pay your own father money that was already his. Do you see that they were laughing at you?

Do you see that common sense and reason are all on my side?"

Barbara's hands covered her face. He could not see the soft curves and lines quivering with dismay and anguish, could not see the cheeks and lips that had grown white. Even if he had, it would not have changed his purpose. Twenty years before he had watched the same lines and coloring change themselves into a mask of despair under the force of his ruthless words and acts.

"I could not know—I did not think——" Barbara's words were low and broken.

"No, you know nothing," her father answered. "You never think. You women are incapable of knowing and thinking. Perhaps you understand me, though, when I say, for the third time, that I will have no interference from you. What's more, I forbid you to go on that road again, forbid it absolutely."

"Forbid me!" It was only the faintest echo, but David Prime heard it.

"Yes, I said forbid you," he answered. "I'll not have you prying into my affairs. Besides that," he added after a moment's silence, "the road's not safe for a girl driving alone. I'm putting in a gang of Portuguese laborers to cut the wood. They've none too much respect for women."

He had smoked his cigar to its end. He flung it into the empty grate and lighted another. When it was burning briskly he spoke in a different tone of voice, although he did not turn to look at the girl, did not see that she was still sitting as his words had left her, crumpled down on the corner of the couch, her quivering face still covered with her hands.

"I have done the right thing by you and I will as long as you'll let me. I'll stand no nonsense, though, and no interference. Is that clear?" He waited for a moment. Barbara did not speak. "Is there anything else you want to know?"

"No, nothing." Barbara's words still came from behind the shielding hands.

"Very well, then," he answered, "that's ended for good and all. When

you need money you can come to me, and that reminds me! Sam Belcher stopped me on my way home from the station and told me that you had been in to get some groceries that you wanted to take to some one. He asked me if it was all right and I told him no, it wasn't all right, and that he knew it wasn't. I hold a mortgage on Belcher's store and another one on his house. He knows which side his bread's buttered on as well as the next man, and he said he'd make it all right—on the bill. This time, though, I'll give you the money to pay for the things you took. Don't let it occur again, though. I'm not *giving* money or the value of money to paupers, do you understand?"

Barbara answered not a word.

"I guess, though, you've got brains enough to understand that much. I'm no fool. Neither was your mother—in some ways. Good night."

He did not stir from his chair. Barbara realized that she was being dismissed, and rose slowly. Her first effort to respond to her father's salutation was fruitless. The words crouched in her throat, but she forced them across her quivering lips.

"Good night, father!"

Not until she had reached her own room, not until she had gone out upon the veranda, did Barbara voice the thought that had been ringing through her brain. Kneeling by the railing of the porch, she buried her face in her arms. Her words sobbed themselves out to the night.

"He knew it! He knew it all the time—yesterday and to-day! It was because he knew it that he asked me not to speak to—my father—about it."

The moon, almost full, bent low over the perfumed warmth of the garden. At the base of the cliffs, the high tide swept its clamorous, crested waves against the rocks, but the girl saw nothing, heard nothing.

Then suddenly, from the rose May tree, flashed a note, faint and sweet, hardly stirring the soft night air; it was followed by a gurgling trill that rose and rose into a passionate burst

of song. Again and again it sounded, so exultant, so dominant that, at last, it penetrated even to Barbara's mind and heart. She turned her tear-washed face toward the tree that stood all radiantly pink in the moon's light.

"Philomel!" She barely breathed the name, but in the breath she answered the love call in the bird's throat. "Philomel, a nightingale."

Again the bird's voice answered her and called to her.

In the same moonlight, far up in the hills, Phil Martin sat on the steps in front of his cabin, an open book on his knees. He read from the page:

With his inshore greens and manifold mid-sea blues,  
Pearl glint, shell tint, ancientist, perfectest hues  
Ever shaming the maidens—lily and rose  
Confess thee and each mild flame that glows  
In the clarified virginal bosoms of stones  
that shine—

It is thine, it is thine.

He had brought the book out to find the words that had slipped into his mind that morning when he had looked into Barbara's beryl-tinted eyes. The rhythmic, flowing lines shaped and reshaped themselves upon his lips, imaging Barbara and not the sea the poet described. He was not thinking of Barbara's loveliness, though, or of the gracious charm of the girl. Rather was his mind fixed upon the awakening that was surely before her. It was wholly impossible that she could live there and not learn what manner of man her father was, what a brute he was, how he was loathed by every one who came into any slightest contact with him. With what courage, he asked himself, could she meet it?

Again the ugly thought that had presented itself to him under the twisted pine, the first day that he had seen her, reared itself before him. He knew the answer that was sometimes given when people asked why old Prime was so good to him, so lenient toward him and toward Theodore Martin. He knew that many of his neighbors thought that Prime had an excellent reason for in-

stalling Mrs. Martin and her boy on the most fertile acres in the Cayucos Cañon. He remembered his mother as a fragile, delicate creature, very different from any woman he had ever seen. He remembered his father always puny, weak and broken. He, himself, was big and strong and lusty with a strength that must have been inherited from a robust parent. Never for a single second had he let his brain harbor the suspicion that he knew had been so often voiced. Now, however, he wondered if he had not the right to aid and protect Barbara Prime even though he had no right to love her as he knew he did love her.

#### CHAPTER VII.

The next morning, Barbara, still lying in the small white bed that had been hers when she was a child, heard the front door of the house close behind her father, heard his heavy steps going down into the garden, heard the gate's latch click as he went out into the street. All night long she had been there, wide awake.

"I'm glad, glad that I never loved him," she cried aloud. "If I had ever known him, if he had been like other fathers, if I had ever loved him at all, it would be so much, so much harder now. But how, oh, how can I ever see him or speak to him again?"

Throwing the covers back, she rose and dressed slowly, as loath to go out from the seclusion of her own white room into the house impregnated with her father's life and being, as she had been to meet him, face to face.

The hours slipped by; but at last the April sunshine and the warm perfume of the April garden called to her so strongly that she went downstairs, calling to the maid that she would have her coffee on the porch and, in the same breath, ordering her horse.

Nick, emerging from the gate, turned, as usual, toward the river road, but Barbara resolutely drew him around the other way. She had in no way persuaded herself that she should yield obedience to her father's order

not to go again up to the Cayucos Cañon. Neither did his suggestion of danger from the Portuguese laborers deter her in the least. She did not care, though, to offer him an aggressive and open defiance. As always, too, the cliffs appealed to her, the sea called to her; and she drove up the long unshaded road that wanders up the coast, crawling now on the edge of the cliff, turning inland at every cañon through which the hills offer their trickling tributaries to the ocean.

The place had changed since she had seen it last. Stretching far out into the water, like a tawny leopard crouching on an azure shield, lay an island, separated, now, at low tide, from the mainland by a strip of glistening sand. When Barbara had been there before this rocky headland had been joined to the cliff by an arch of rock, a natural bridge too dangerous to walk upon, and yet—or so it had seemed—a permanent leash withholding the mass of rocks from the clamorous sea. The arch had been broken in some mighty upheaval or onslaught of the waves.

Driving Nick into a miniature sheltered cañon, Barbara tied him there. With cautious feet she descended a straight flight of steps cut in the rock that she had discovered long before on some childish adventure of exploration. The tide had ebbcd to its lowest reach, and the sea, quiescent for a moment, lapped caressingly upon the yellow shingle. Standing on this beach, she could see that another flight of steps, a little steeper even than those she had just descended, climbed to the top of the island. The girl mounted quickly to the grassy plateau above. Not over ten feet wide at any point, this stretched out for a hundred yards and more, and there yielded to the sandstone ledges that, dropping a few feet at a time, carried the island out beyond the heaving line of the shore's breakers.

On one of the upper ledges of the rock Barbara sat down. The mild mother sea crooned a lullaby and, listening to it, yielding to it, she fell asleep.

An hour passed before the silence in which she rested was disturbed.

Then, a human step crunched across the rocks, a human voice, singing, broke the stillness.

"Look off, dear love, across the shallow sands And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea."

Still she did not move. Not until the steps and voice had come quite close to her, did their owner perceive her lying there, in her dun-colored covert coat, upon the dun-colored rocks. The silence fell once more, but this time it held in its embrace the sleeping girl and the man who stood over her.

"She must, already, have spoken to her father," the man muttered. "If only I had known how to save her, how to spare her!"

He sat down at some little distance from her and watched her as she slept. Some consciousness of his presence must have entered her brain. Into it crept a memory of the moonlit night, the voice of the nightingale.

"Philomel!" The name was only in her thoughts. It did not pass her lips. She opened her eyes and saw him sitting there. Just in the instant between sleeping and waking, it seemed almost as though she had summoned him, as though he had come in answer to her call.

"Why did you come? How did you come?" she cried, springing up. "I thought I was all alone on my island."

"Is it your island?" he questioned. "Then I must confess my trespass. I came this morning for mussels. I always get them here because they seem so much sweeter and better on these rocks that run so far out into the sea. The low tides that come with the full moon uncover some beds that I call my own."

"Then it is your island instead of mine." Forgetting, for the moment, all the miseries of life, conscious only of the pleasure of seeing him, Barbara laughed lightly. "I have never set foot on it before. I did not know that the arch was down. Did it fall last winter?"

They were walking toward the shore, along the strip of heath. Below them, on either side, the blue water was ris-

ing in crested rollers. At the top of the rock steps Barbara stopped abruptly. The lower ones were covered with water; not quiet, lapping waves, but a veritable maelstrom of foam that swirled up over them, out and in between the boulders, around to the other edge of the cliff, where it met the incoming wave and, in the contact, rose, in iridescent spray, high into the air.

"Why, the tide is in," Barbara cried.

"I must have worked longer than I thought for," muttered Martin, looking round about him at the shadows. "It is not in, but it must have turned an hour ago."

"And I have been asleep!" Barbara descended two steps.

"You cannot go back, now!" the man exclaimed, reaching his hand out toward her, but not touching her. "You cannot—no one could keep a footing on those rocks."

"But how else can we go back?" she demanded, descending another step. "What other way is there?"

"Why, I—I am afraid there is no other way," he answered. "I was caught here this way once before."

"What did you do?" she asked. "How did you get back?"

"I——" He hesitated for an instant. "Why, of course, I had to wait for the tide to——"

"Wait for the tide!" Barbara interrupted. "But the tide will not be high until to-night, until ten or eleven o'clock!"

"And it will not be low enough for us to cross for some six hours more." He offered the explanation with a certain hesitation. Perhaps, it was not essential that she should know, all at once, just how long she would be held a prisoner there. "Perhaps——"

To his surprise, Barbara laughed.

"How perfectly absurd!" she cried. "And how fortunate it is that you are here! I should have been—I don't know what I should have been if I had been alone! But this is like being shipwrecked, isn't it?"

Why she laughed she could not have explained even to herself. But no

other attitude that she could have assumed would have made the situation so possible, so endurable. Still laughing, she ascended the steps and looked into the basket that was hung at his back.

"Are they really good to eat?" she asked. "I suppose we will be tragically hungry, don't you?"

He answered her questions as she asked them, but hardly had he entered upon the mood she offered him when hers changed.

"Let us walk out quite to the end again," she interrupted him, "as far away from the world as we can get. Do you know when I came here, when I sat down here before I went to sleep, I was wishing that I could stay right here forever. I was almost wishing that the sea would come up and cover me, and I wondered if I would have the courage to sit here and let it take me."

She sat down again where he had seen her first. Claspings her hands about her knees, she looked again at the meeting edges of the sea and sky, the sky that was as burnished now as the sea, across which a silver pathway led.

"You spoke to your father last night?" He was not answering her words, but the thoughts that lay behind them.

"I spoke to him, yes," she said simply. "I know, now. I understand, now, all, everything, I think. And I know—and appreciate very much your effort to keep the knowledge from me."

He could not answer her and moved away, looking down into the blue water that swept, in rounding surges, past the base of the island. In a few moments, though, he returned and sat down with his back to the western sea and sky, facing her so that he could see the silver sheen of the sea reflected on the green surface of her eyes.

She did not look at him, she did not recognize his return by any movement. After a moment, though, she spoke again.

"I said that I knew all, but I don't—quite all. I asked him about—about

you and your father—and he told me nothing."

"For some reason, he has always been very kind to me and to my father, Miss Prime." Martin stopped for an instant. He had never spoken her name before, and the sound of it was curious on his lips. Even she seemed to recognize something strange in it. She turned her eyes toward him for a moment, then straightway looked out across the silver path to the sea's edge. "If I knew just what he did tell you," he began again.

"He told me enough," Barbara interrupted, and the last word was caught in a breath like a sob. "He told me that he owned that mower, that he owned the land where Mrs. Weverill lived. Do I need to know more? Can't I see plainly what manner of man he is? Would further details help me to know any more clearly? Has he treated any one differently? You say that he has been kind to you, and to your father. Has he really been kind to you, do you suppose? Has he really treated you differently?"

"Yes," Martin, watching her face, answered slowly. "I have no idea why he has been so lenient to us. Sometimes I have paid the interest on our land, but oftener I haven't. My mother had, apparently, paid very little of the principal when she died. I say *apparently* because I have no papers of any kind telling me anything of my mother, of my father, of myself. She died very suddenly, and it seemed to me, just at the last, that she was trying to tell me that Mr. Prime had some papers, that he could tell me all that I would need to know. But, when I asked him, he said that he had nothing, that he knew nothing. I have wondered sometimes if—"

"You have wondered sometimes if he really had, if he really knew!" Barbara's voice was bitter. "Oh, you have known always what he was!"

She bowed her head upon her knees, and Martin thought that she was crying, but when she looked up again her eyes were dry. The line of light on the sea's breast had grown narrower. The



gleam in Barbara's eyes was but a single thread of silver.

"You say that you have lived there always?" Barbara asked, adding another question before he could answer her: "But you have been away—to school?"

"No, I have never been away, longer than I am being now," he answered. "It has been quite impossible for me to go, to leave my father."

"But——" Her eyes asked the question her lips could not frame.

"Perhaps I have learned as much of books and that sort of thing as I should have learned at school," he answered. "I think my mother must have been quite different from any one I have ever seen, until you came that day. She taught me very carefully while she lived; and she left me not many books but some, and told me to read, to read always, to read carefully, to read the thoughts of great men, to read them aloud so that my own thoughts could form themselves upon them, so that my words would shape themselves upon them. She told me once that she had always hoped, that she still hoped that I would be a poet. My name, Philomel——" His voice died away.

"Is a nightingale," she finished, "the sweetest singer in all the world. And you have never fulfilled her hopes? You have never written anything?"

"No," he answered slowly. "I sometimes wonder if her very efforts have not, in themselves, left me quite voiceless. I have so followed her instructions that for every feeling of my heart, for everything I see, I have ready the words of some one else, words that seem to me to be so infinitely more beautiful than anything that I could say."

The saffron sky grew rose and red. The sea, in seeming jealousy, flung across her breast a glinting veil of saffron, red, and rose.

"Oh, if only you could have seen it," Barbara cried, turning her eyes from the glorious western sky and sea to his face. "Why, why weren't you watching it?"

"I have seen it," he answered, "every color, every sheen and shade, and each one a thousand times more beautiful than anything the sea or sky could show, for I have seen them——"

She was leaning toward him, her eyes on his, but he stopped abruptly. What would she think if he told her that, in her eyes, he had seen the setting of the sun, the wooing of the sea, the marriage of the sun and sea, that he had dared to dream——

"I have seen so many sunsets," he concluded lamely, "and listen:

"Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun,  
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,  
And Cleopatra night drinks all.  
Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart;  
Glimmer, ye waves, round else unlighted sands."

Barbara's eyelids fell, and he could see only that the long black lashes lay wet against her cheeks.

"What could I ever see more beautiful than that?" he asked simply. "What could I ever say that would be more beautiful?"

## CHAPTER VIII.

To his work, on the morning after his interview with Barbara, David Prime brought a mind clear and absolutely untroubled by any idea of the havoc he had wrought in his daughter's heart and life. She hardly entered his thoughts at all, although she was the indirect cause of the first order that he gave to Jim Harris.

"Get out the map of the upper Cayucos district."

An instant's glance at it satisfied the only doubt in his mind. A small cross on the hill above Hiram Lane's land and a little to the south of it indicated a spring. A wavering mark from this cross to the line of the Cayucos indicated the course of the spring's outlet.

His hand upon the map, the grimy forefinger cutting the wavering line at right angles, he said:

"I've sent fifty Portuguese up the cañon to cut wood. Go up there, this morning, and set them to work, here. Tell the foreman to pile the wood here."

"On the edge of that waterway?" Harris scanned the map with careful eyes.

"No, in the bed of the waterway," his employer answered.

"But an obstruction there will change the course of the water," Harris expostulated. "The land here falls off quickly to the north." His own finger indicated a spot on the map, the palm of his hand lay on Hiram Lane's property. "It would leave these places dry."

"Damn it all, what do I care what land it leaves dry?" exclaimed Prime. "I want that water to be turned down into a trough here. There'll be ox teams on the road all summer, and water will be needed."

"But Lane's place will be ruined," asserted Harris. "And Lane owns the property. He has paid every cent on it. He must have rights to the water."

"Where are your wits this morning, Harris? Have you forgotten that in every one of those Cayucos contracts I reserved the right, absolute and entire, to the Cayucos and its tributaries? Lane has satisfied his contract, but he hasn't got a deed."

"He came for the deed months ago," Harris was still pugnacious.

"Yes, he came for it, but it wasn't ready," retorted Prime. "And he came again and it wasn't ready, but that's not your business. You can take my orders and see that they are carried out." He folded the map and handed it to Harris, then turned to the letters that lay on his desk.

"I saw Sylva, last night." There was only a slight note of resentment, now, in Harris' voice. "He says—some one put him up to it, I guess—he says he wants a paper saying that you'll open the road through the Graham pasture if he does the work on his part of the road."

"Well, you told him he couldn't have it, didn't you?" snapped Prime. "Couldn't have any such paper, I mean."

"I told him he'd better come to see you about it," Harris answered.

"Why the devil can't you attend to

those things yourself? You know I'm only having him do that work so's I can get it done for nothing. You know I'm coming down on Sylva as soon as the work is done, that I'm going to take his land away from him. The beggar hasn't paid his interest for six months. I'm only keeping him on till the work's done. You know that as well as I do. Sylva hasn't got a damned cent to his name, and he and his worthless sons'll be off that land before the month's out!"

The door had opened silently and a swarthy, stocky man, half Spaniard, half Indian, had entered the office, cringing as he stood in the door, but galvanized into sudden life as he heard the words Prime had spoken.

"Me no gotta da mon, no!" he shouted. "My sons no gotta da mon, no! But my sons worka da road, worka da road an' you say, you tella me——"

"Here, none o' that, Sylva!" Harris stepped in front of him. "What difference does it make where your sons work? If you've got no money to pay for your land you've got to git off it. You owe thirty-six dollars, an' you pay it or go."

Prime had not spoken a word. Slouching in his huge chair, he had not even looked at his angry visitor. The dispute was, apparently, of no interest to him, and he was absorbed in the pile of letters in front of him, but Harris had seen the motion of his lips. Harris now carried out the order he had read thereon.

"You'll pay, I say, or you'll go, d'you hear? I let you off last quarter because you said you had manzanita roots enough to sell to pay it and that you'd pay it when you sold the wood. Then the wood burned up. Now, you can pay to-day or clear out."

"He say," shouted Sylva, shaking his fists at Prime, "he say for my boys opena da road. He say I hava de right a way."

"None of your damned lies, now," commanded Harris, "an' no more words out o' your mouth, either. It's the cash or you vamose, see? Get out of here



and bring the money back in an hour or else git off the land. You signed the contract yerself an' you've no kick coming. Git, I say!"

Sylva, shaking his fists, muttering, retreated before Harris' words and menacing advance. As the door closed behind him, Prime spoke.

"Follow the fellow up and find out who put him up to this talk of rights of way and having papers signed about the work he does. And while you're out, send Murphy up on the eleven o'clock to give those orders to the foreman. He'll do it as well as you, and tell him to shack the men on the Wewerill and Sylva places."

David Prime's horses were the only luxury that he allowed himself. The breeding of the beasts he drove was the only breeding that he recognized. Dammed by an Arabian mare, sired by a racing stallion that had been a record-breaker throughout the country, the colts were raised on one of his own ranches and sent up, half broken, to their owner, to be driven to the death as he drove everything over which he had control. The pair before him now had been with him but a few months. They were long-bodied, narrow-necked creatures with wide frightened eyes and quivering nostrils. Under the double lash of whip and voice they raced over the winding, dusty road as though they saw in flight some hope of escape from the dominant monster behind them. The sun set. The white moon rose, and still the man drove furiously across the hills, down the twisting valley and out upon the broad plain, many fertile acres of which belonged to him. Long after midnight he reached the ranch house and there he fell asleep.

So it was that David Prime was not at home when, in the early hours of the morning, his daughter drove up to his house accompanied by Phil Martin. Together they had watched the moon rise, together they had breathed the perfumed air of the night. Together they had waited for the ocean's tide that held them prisoner to fall and let them pass. In the hours that

had slipped by them, all unnoted and unnumbered, Barbara had told him every detail of her childish life in the garden, on the cliffs, and on the hills. She had introduced him to the metropolis where her last six years had been spent. She had confessed to him the longing for her mother that had so newly awakened in her heart, had revealed to him the inmost agony of her soul in her interview with her father, had let him see all her loneliness and desolation.

And he, before the sand had offered them a pathway back to the mainland, to the world in which their separate pathways lay, had let her see deep into his mind even while he kept close guard upon his heart. He had proved to her, too, that, all rough and rude as the surroundings of his life had been, all untaught and uninstructed as he was, yet he had so fitted up and garnished the chambers of his brain that it was a palace wherein a king might reign, a palace from which a prince might woo.

Not until they reached the place where Nick had been patiently waiting throughout all the long hours did Barbara realize the gulf that had been crossed, nor did she stop, even then, to ask if it had been he or she who had taken the steps.

"I may drive you home?" He asked the question, though it was a wholly needless formality, because she had seated herself at the farther side of the cart and had let him take the lines into his own hands.

Through the sleeping world they drove, still together in the isolation of the night. Only the dewy, fragrant garden awaited them, only the waking birds welcomed them.

"Oh, it has all been so wonderful, so beautiful!" Barbara cried. "I shall never, never forget one single instant of it." She stood still for a moment on the lower step of the veranda and held out both hands to him, but he took only one of them and kept it for only a second while he answered:

"I have been wondering if it is given to a man to see such beauty just once

in all his life, so that he may know how to shape his dreams of heaven."

At the instant, a bird in the rose May tree called sleepily, roused into a trilling bubble of notes and sent its heart out into the night.

"A nightingale!" the man cried softly.

"Yes, a nightingale," she answered, "and it is always there, close, close to my window."

"I pray that sometimes, then, it will sing to you of me!" The words were spoken so low that she could hardly hear them.

"Always, always, it will sing of——" She could not speak the word that had not yet been spoken between them, and she ended with his own phrase: "I think, now, it will always sing to me of you!"

#### CHAPTER IX.

Late the next morning Barbara waked to a joyous iteration of every hour and moment that she had spent, prisoner of the sea, under the sun and moon, alone with the man who already filled her universe. A little timorously, she asked if her father had been at home the night before, if he had questioned her absence; and realized dimly that she was thankful to the Fate that held her destiny in its hands when she received a message saying that he had gone down to the Visalia ranch. She had not yet left her room when she heard the jangling notes of the old-fashioned bell at the front door. A moment later the maid called to her that some one wanted to see her. The hot blood rushed to her cheeks. It could be only one person! It could be only Phil Martin!

She hurried downstairs and into the sitting room, but it was empty. Glancing out upon the veranda, she saw the small red head of Thad Weverill. The boy was sitting on one of the steps, holding in his arms her gray Persian cat. Laughing at herself, at her own disappointment, she opened the door. The boy's blue eyes and red lips laughed back at her.

"I guess he's a friendly cat, ain't

he?" he commented easily, as though it were the most natural thing in the world for him to be sitting on David Prime's steps.

Barbara sat down near him, and the big cat sprang over into her lap. Thad moved closer to her. Resting his sharp elbows on her knees, he dug his fingers deep into the long gray fur. The boy's assurance, his absolute confidence in her friendliness touched her, and she threw her arm around him. She was still so conscious of the difference between her own station in life and that of the man who occupied her thoughts that even this contact with a child of the soil seemed a consolation to her.

"You wanted to see me, Thad?" As she spoke the words she knew that she was hoping that he had been sent to her, that he had come only as a messenger from another.

"Why, o' course," he answered. "That's why I comed. Hi Lane brung me down an' he's a-goin' to take me back. She's sick."

Barbara knew that, in the lad's mind, *she* could be no one else except his mother.

"Is she really sick, Thad? What is the matter? How do you know that she is sick?"

"Why, I dunno," he answered indifferently. "She's in bed at Mis' Cullen's 'n' yistiddy she didn't know Mis' Cullen ner me 'n' she wouldn't let 'em put the baby now'eres near her 'n' I guess Mis' Cullen's 'fraid the baby's goin' to die an' they've put a lot o' dagoes in our house," he ran on, not waiting for any expression of the sympathy that was so plainly written on Barbara's face that even he could read it. "An' they've taken yo'r mower an' Phil wa'n't there an' I couldn't stop 'em an' th's dagoes gone in at Sylva's, too, an' I guess the's goin' to be hell to pay."

He stopped, partly for lack of breath, but also to question the horror on Barbara's face.

"Oh, Thad," she cried.

"It's what Hi said to Jake, this mornin'," he answered, drawing his fingers through the cat's silky fur.

"Jake's at the saloon, yo' know. An' Hi's mad's thunder, too, though th' ain't no dagoes at his place. He said he was a-goin' to raise hell."

On the instant, Barbara remembered that she had told her father that Annie Lane had sent her to Mrs. Weverill's. On the instant, she wondered if, already, her father had wreaked his vengeance in some way on Annie Lane's husband. She sprang to her feet.

"I will go up there, now," she exclaimed. "I will take you back with me." Then she remembered her father's edict. She would tell him when she saw him that she would not yield to it, but she could not disobey him while he was away. "No, I cannot go to-day. But, to-morrow, or the next day, I will surely go. Will you—Thad, are you listening?—will you go to Annie Lane's and tell her that I will be up to-morrow? Will you tell Mrs. Cullen to send me word if there is anything that I can do for your mother and—wait a moment." She ran into the house and returned in a short time with a sealed envelope in her hand. "See, Thad, I am pinning this inside your shirt." Her actions followed her words. "It's money, and you must be very careful of it. Give it to Mrs. Cullen and tell her that I will send more when I can. Will you remember, Thad, and will you be careful?"

"Yes, an' I'll tell Phil you're a-comin', too. Phil only got back from som'ares this mornin'. He tol' his father he'd bring mussals back from up the coast an' I guess he fergot 'em, an' I heard the ol' man a yellin' like mad at him. He's wursen a child an' Mis' Cullen says Phil's a fool not to put him in a 'sylum. I guess a 'sylum's where they takes care o' folks like that, don't you?"

Barbara had no answer ready for this query, and the boy, seeing that she was no longer paying any attention to him, rose from the step.

"Well, s'long," he exclaimed. "I guess I'd better be a-lookin' fer Hi. I thought yo'd better know 'bout your mower an' I'll tell 'em what you said. S'long." He had vaulted over the low

gate and was running down the road before Barbara could stop him.

"Tell them that I will surely come to-morrow or the day after," she called to him.

An hour later, though, she received a telegram from the Visalia ranch, saying that her father was going on down the coast and that he would not be back for several days. To wait so long seemed impossible to Barbara. She knew, however, that if she was to live with him on any terms whatsoever she must not offend him with any act of flagrant disobedience. The hours and days dragged unmercifully. The house was unendurable. Its every corner she had ransacked, searching for some tangible evidence of her mother's life, but she had found nothing. It seemed as though the woman, in her death, had removed all visible presence of her years of life there. The garden was Barbara's only refuge, and in it she spent as much of her time as she could.

Late in the afternoon of the fourth day of her father's absence, she went down into the village on some trivial errand, and there she met Annie Lane.

"Why, Annie," she exclaimed in surprise, "what are you doing here? Why didn't you come to see me?"

"Shure, darlint, I couldn't." The woman's evasive eyes and tone reawakened Barbara's suspicions.

"But why not, Annie? Have you been in town all day? Won't you come up to the house with me, now? Don't you want some tea or something before you start back?"

"Faith! An' I don't know if we're goin' back at awl," the woman answered. "Hi an' me are in awful trouble, Miss Babs, an'—"

"Yes, but you should have come to me, Annie," Barbara cried. "Couldn't you come to me? Is the trouble something you couldn't bring to me?"

"Now, don't be thinkin' that, dearie." The old nurse turned away. "It's nothin' that yez can help about."

Barbara's eyes turned to the shabby wagon near which the woman had been standing, to the sorry-looking white horse that was attached to it.

"Won't you drive me out on to the cliffs, Annie?" she asked. "That is, if you're not going straight back to your farm." The woman stood irresolute, but Barbara climbed up into the wagon. "Please, Annie. I'm so—so terribly lonely! I want you to tell me something about my mother. Can't you, won't you?"

The Irish woman clambered ponderously up to her seat, and a moment later Hiram Lane, standing in the doorway of a saloon, saw his wife and Barbara Prime drive past him, saw them turn into the street that led up to the cliffs. If Mrs. Lane saw him it was only out of the corner of her eye; she did not turn her head in his direction, but Barbara heard the quick breath, half sob, half sigh, that escaped her lips. Looking round, she saw the man, saw the red flush on his face, the drunken stare in his eyes. She caught her own breath behind her clinched teeth. That, then, was one of the results of her father's business methods!

They had climbed the hill and were driving on the edge of the cliff before either of them spoke a word. At last Barbara drew in a deep breath.

"Do you remember that smell of the tarweed and kelp, Annie? It seems to me that I love it better than any fragrance in all the world. I've remembered it, always, wherever I've been. It's been so terribly lonely for me since I've been at home. I've had nothing to do but remember all the things I used to do when I was a child, all the things I used to care for, all the things you used to do for me. I've been wishing—oh, how I have been wishing that I could remember something about my mother! Won't you tell me about her?"

"Shure, an' it's not fit fer yez to be livin' there alone, child," Annie replied. "Ain't there annywheres yez can go? An' it's not much I'm knowin' about yer mother, I'm afraid. I was only comin' to her afther she moved down to the new house, jest afor' ye yerself was born, and that, ye know, was jest afore she died."

"The new house?" Barbara echoed in

surprise. "Was that house new when I was born? But where had they lived before? Where were my brothers born? Where did they live? My father never told me. No one ever told me anything."

"An' p'rhaps yer father wouldn't be carin' to remimber! P'rhaps he wouldn't be carin' to have yez know. But they lived, I've heard tell, up beyant our place, up at the head of the cañon, near by the springs. Shure, child, ye've seen the owld cabin there. Yez can see it from the road in places, an' from Phil Martin's, an' from the porch av me own home. But it's loike enough ye've never noticed it av ye didn't know it had been yer mother's home wanst."

"You mean the little gray cabin under the double pine?" questioned Barbara. "I've never been up there. And my mother lived there! I wonder—"

"Shure, an' I was up there an' not so long ago. The Jersey calfed up near it; I was up to dhrive her home. Yer father's niver rinted it ner sold it, an' it's just as they lift it whin they cam' out of it."

"Oh, I must see it, I must go up at once!" The girl clasped her hands together impetuously. "Oh, if only my father would come home!"

"It's glad I am he's away," muttered the woman beside her.

"But, Annie!" Barbara's hand rested on the old woman's arm. "What is it that my father has done to Mr. Lane? Won't you tell me? I—I know what kind of a man he is. I—I found out, just the other day, and if he's been cruel or unjust, to you and to Mr. Lane, why, it's all my fault—all because I told him. Won't you let me try to make it right? What has he done, Annie?"

The woman yielded at last to the pleading tone. After a moment the whole story came rushing out on a flood of tears; the temptations resisted, the sacrifices made in order to pay for the little bit of land, the long days and even nights of driving work. Now, all was ruined, all made valueless by the deflection of the water necessary not

only for irrigation but for the lives of the cows and horses, pigs and chickens that represented the hoardings of years.

"And has Mr. Lane no rights?" asked Barbara when the recital was ended. "Surely, no man can be so absolutely in the power of another!"

"Faith, an' no man has anny rights whin he's wanst put hissel' into David Prime's hands." The woman spoke with intense bitterness. "It's only wrongs they have, wrongs an' more wrongs. Hi 'd oughter known better than to sign the contrack he did, but he was careless-like, thinkin' that even Mr. Prime wouldn't be tryin' to get the betther av us, seein's how I'd worruked fer him so long an' cared fer yez an' awl. An' it's Hi, hisself—he sees it now—has signed away his own rights to the wather. But that's what's makin' him—makin' him do what he's doin' now. Oh, it's the same ind fer awl o' thim! The dhrink takes 'em whin they're desperat, an' they go down."

Barbara had taken the lines into her own hands. Now she turned back.

"Won't you ask him—won't you tell him?" she began. "Don't you think that Mr. Lane would go home with you now, Annie, if you were to tell him that I—oh, but I am as helpless as any one! I have nothing of my own. But I will try, I will do all that I can, and surely it will be something. Even if my father does not come back I will go up to-morrow to see you—to see if there isn't something that I can do."

#### CHAPTER X.

The only quality which Barbara Prime had inherited from her father was a certain grim strength of determination. During his absence, which she had supposed would be short, she had thought she would be willing to let the matter of her obedience to his command not to drive on the river road rest in absolute abeyance. When he returned it would be time enough to tell him that she saw no reason in the command, that unless she could see reason in it she would not obey it. Now her

interview with Annie Lane had roused in her a determination not only to assert herself but also to go up to see the woman, to see for herself if there was not something that she could do to right the wrong for which she felt that she was responsible. Early in the afternoon, she ordered her horse and drove up into the forbidden territory.

At the Weverill cabin there was no evidence of any human habitation. Indeed, there was none there to show itself, for the Portuguese laborers who had been installed there had chosen, rather, to herd together with the others of their gang at Sylva's. At the Martin place Barbara glanced furtively, then openly, but she saw no one at work on the hill, no one anywhere about the place. A few miles farther up the road, she stopped at Annie Lane's, but there, also, an empty air of desolation greeted her. Sitting in her cart, she called aloud to Annie and to Mr. Lane, but no voice answered her. Knotting her lines loosely about the gate post, she went up the trim path that led to the house. She mounted the steps to the veranda and knocked on the door, but again no sound answered. There was nothing there to tell her that Annie Lane had wakened early that morning and found Hiram gone, not only from his bed but from the house and from the place; that, desperately anxious to find him, to stay his hand from any evil deed it might intend, she had followed him all day long, arriving always too late at every haunt he had visited. In her anxiety she had forgotten absolutely that Barbara had said that she would drive up to see her. While Barbara stood there she heard the soft patter of bare feet on the dry ground. She turned and saw the blue eyes and red hair of Thad Weverill.

"I seen yer hoss from up to the new dam," the boy shouted. "'N' I comed down 'n' I guess Miss Lane 'n' Hi ain't home."

A sudden wind had sprung up from the south. A hot gust caught the dried and powdered leaves from the garden, eddied them round about, and flung them against the house, showering Bar-



bara with an impalpable white powder. She wiped her lips with her handkerchief.

"Can't you get me a drink of water, Thad?" she asked. "Don't you know where Mrs. Lane keeps a cup—or a dipper?"

"Water!" The boy grinned at her. "Why, don't yer know? The' ain't no water here. Yistiddy, no, day before, Miss Lane hed to take all her chickens down to Mis' Cullen's 'n' Hi druv his cows 'n' hosses to Phil's. The' ain't no water here 'cause they'se buildin' the dam I was a-watchin'—"

"Not even water to drink?" she gasped.

"Nop 'n' won't be no more!" The boy's voice held some of the excitement that it had caught from Hiram Lane and his neighbors. "Hi says th' won't never be water on this place no more."

"But why does he let them build the dam?" Barbara cried. "Why doesn't he break it or——" She stopped suddenly, arrested by the curious expression on the boy's face. "Oh, I must see Annie to-day. Won't you wait here, Thad, and tell her, when she comes back, that I have just gone up to the old house on the hill? She will know where I mean. Tell her that I will be back soon. Don't let her go away until I have seen her."

"Yep, I'll tell her," Thad answered, "'n' I'll tell Hi, too, what you said about breakin' the dam. I guess he'd like to break it all right. Hi's pretty mad. He's mad as thunder!"

He squatted down in the dust and watched her drive away up the road, watched her until she had passed beyond his vision. Then he rose and scurried back up the hill to the place where the gang of men was at work, piling logs and brush in the former path of the spring's outlet.

The road, little used and washed into deep ruts by the winter's rains, took all of Barbara's attention. From time to time she passed a dejected cabin. Beyond the last of these the way became almost impassable, and she was glad to see that it ended at a gate into a field that, at some time, had been planted to

corn. Between the stubbles the grass, that a few days before had been green and fresh, was tawny with the sun's fierce rays. Over it a little cloud of dust whirled in the wind that still blew from the south, but at its farther edge Barbara could see the house she sought.

She tried to open the gate, but it was fastened with a heavy padlock, so she tied Nick to one of the posts, climbed the fence and walked across the field. Her pulses throbbed with the unwonted exertion and excitement.

She went on up to the porch. Its boards were all awry and warped with the sun and rain. She crossed it carefully and laid her hand upon the latch of the door. It refused to yield to her touch. One of the windows, however, hanging loosely in its frame, fell in when she shook it. Climbing through the aperture, she found that the door had been fastened on the inside with a heavy bolt. Drawing this, she opened the door and let into the deserted room a flood of sunshine, a gust of hot wind that swept the dust and papers from the floor. She replaced the window, mindful, even then, of the fact that she was trespassing upon her father's property, and as she worked at it her eyes searched the place for any message that it might hold for her.

Tattered and faded the paper hung from the wooden walls, but where it still held she saw that it had been covered with roses, red or pink. An old chair lay on its side. Too old for service of any kind, it had been thrown aside. She picked it up carefully, dusted its rungs with her handkerchief and leaned it against the wall. Entering the other room of the cabin, a sharp cry broke from her lips. The object upon which her eyes had fallen was a wooden cradle, one rocker gone, the other broken; a cradle, though, that told its own story. For a moment, Barbara knelt on the floor beside it, rocking it slowly, wondering how the mother could have left it there.

"Surely, surely, there must be something else!" she cried, springing to her feet, but a searching glance around the room revealed nothing.



In the outer room, though, she saw a ladder that led up to a second story or attic. Testing its rungs with her hands, she climbed up, lifted the heavy trap-door at its head, and found herself in a single room. At its centre it was high enough for her to stand erect, but from there the ceiling sloped down and met the floor on every side. A solitary window, looking toward the north, permitted an eerie twilight to enter the place which, just at first, seemed absolutely empty.

Waiting, however, until her eyes had accustomed themselves to the gloom, Barbara peered into every corner and crevice, searching always for something that might speak to her of her mother. Moving stealthily across the creaking floor, creeping on her hands and knees, she groped her way toward a corner where there seemed to be a box of some sort. It was quite small and she drew it out into the light. There, it revealed itself to be a trunk, leather-covered, damp, and mouldy. It was not locked and its fastenings yielded easily to her eager fingers.

Lifting the cover, she bent over the contents, bundles of cloth, apparently, sorted into rolls of linen, cotton or flannel. Under these was a folded square of flowered silk, coquettishly knotted up in one corner and edged with lace. Turning it, twisting it, now this way, now that, she discovered two tiny letters—M. S.

Mary Starford had been her mother's name. This thing had been her mother's, then, when she was married, before she was married. Through the tears that ran all unheeded down her cheeks, Barbara looked at it, raised it to her lips and kissed it again and again.

"Oh, mother, little mother! And he—he had all that! He had all that part of you!"

Again her fingers delved into the trunk. This time she drew out some small slips and dresses, yellow with age, falling to bits even in her reverent fingers. Three pairs of tiny shoes lay under these, and in the last corner of the trunk was a bundle of old letters.

Dropping everything else, Barbara carried them to the window. There were only a few, perhaps six in all, and they were tied with a wide, lustrous ribbon that had been white. Were they love letters? Ought she to read them? Even while she asked the questions, the fragile band gave way and the letters slipped to the floor at her feet. Kneeling down to pick them up, she saw that one was signed "Elizabeth," that all were in the same fine handwriting.

Opening the first, Barbara read it through, hoping that in it she might find some revelation of the mother whom she sought. But there was little that she could glean. The letter began: "My dearest Mary," and it was full of other endearing terms. This woman, this Elizabeth, whoever she had been, had loved her mother, and Barbara's heart warmed to her. Otherwise the epistle contained only references to some place in which the writer still lived, some place quite familiar to the person who was to read the letter. It was exquisitely expressed, though, and breathed in every word a spirit of refinement, of grace, of culture.

Glancing through the next one, Barbara saw that it held as little information. But the third began differently.

Mary, my beloved, it has come at last, it has come even to me. But, before I tell you, I must make confession to you. You know how often you have said that you envied me, envied my money and all that I had. I have known, dearest, known so well how hard it was for you and David to be so poor when we had so much. But Mary, my Mary, my life has been one long envy of you, every hour and every day, envy of your three beautiful boys. I have envied you their lips, their tiny clinging hands. There has never been a day when I would not have given all, all, every atom of the money we had in exchange for the joy that is yours. I have prayed for it, prayed for it, day and night.

Barbara raised her eyes from the letter. Her mother had been poor, then, really poor! Poor, perhaps, even as—she tried not to think the name—even as the poorest of her father's tenants were now! And this woman, this Elizabeth must have been very rich! She returned to the letter.

Have you guessed it, dearest? But, of course, you have. My prayers are answered. My joy is coming to me. In a few short months, the longing pain of my lips will be assuaged, the aching void in breast and heart will be filled. It is already filled, filled to overflowing, but I am waiting now only for the actual comfort the tiny lips and hands will bring.

The rest of that letter, the others that followed it were full of plans, of joys and hopes, all until the last. That was very short. It was this one, though, that wrung a cry from Barbara's lips, that left her stunned and breathless.

My boy has come, my Philomel has come. Mary, Mary, the entire universe is singing of love, love, and nothing but love because my Philomel is born. Theodore is the proudest, most exultant, happiest man in all the world. He seems a very god in his strength and joy. He says the name I have chosen is absurd, ridiculous, but my boy's voice must sing to all the world of love even as his baby voice speaks of it to me. He must be a poet, Mary, who will sing, even as the nightingale sings, so that all the world may hear that love is life, that life is love.

Philomel's mother,  
ELIZABETH MARTIN.

Phil Martin's mother! This woman, this Elizabeth, this cultured, refined woman! This woman who had spoken of her own wealth, her own riches, comparing them with David Prime's poverty! Phil Martin's mother! And Theodore Martin, the doddering imbecile she had seen, proud, exultant, happy, a god in his strength and joy! But Phil had said that his mother had brought his father, helpless as a baby, to that wretched cabin where they lived!

Barbara sprang to her feet, scattering the pages of the letters on the floor. Then she sank down again, crouching, burying her face in her knees.

"Oh, what happened?" she moaned. "What can have happened? Phil— Oh, Phil said that my father had been kind to them. What had he done to them? What can he have done? I—I cannot bear it unless I know!"

## CHAPTER XI.

Upon Theodore Martin's fragment of intellect, the summer's heat acted as a narcotic draught. Throughout the long hot hours he slept like one drugged with

poison or with wine. His son was relieved temporarily from his ever watchful vigilance and care. Once, in the early afternoon, he went out to see if the water fountains in the brooders were full. Standing in the doorway for a second, he saw that, up on the mountain side, a fire was burning briskly, but he knew that the loggers were at work there and gave the matter little heed.

The wind rose, blew in gusts against the doors and windows, shook the frail wooden structure as though it would lift it and fling it aside. But Martin, absorbed in reading, heard it not. Nor did he, a little later, heed the hurrying teams and shouting human beings who rushed up the road, not a hundred yards from his retreat. His father still slept. His time and his thoughts were all his own. Two, three, four hours passed.

At last he rose, stretched himself, and opened wide the door that led out on to the porch. He rubbed his eyes, staring at the spectacle that met his gaze, as though he had just awakened from a sound sleep. The small fire that he had seen blazing on the hillside had been swept to the crest of the range. It was leaping, now, along the ridge, in a riot of furious color and smoke, red and yellow flames against a cobalt sky, monstrous pillars of black smoke barring at intervals the infernal scene.

The air was filled with a suffocating resinous odor, with the ashes of burnt leaves and trees. Far up the road, Martin could see a group of men and women huddled together, shouting vociferously. Astride his own gate post, Thad Weverill screamed in excited acclamation of every fresh burst of flame.

"Gee! that was a bully one! Gosh! Look at that! Hi, there, Phil," he yelled as Martin rushed down to the gate, "I thought you was gone long ago. Hi Lane said the'd be hell to pay 'n' I guess this is it!"

The accusation in the boy's words had already voiced itself in the man's brain.

"How long has it been burning?" he

demanded. "When did the second fire start?"

"I guess they was both started to wonst," the boy yelled. "'N' the's goin' to backfire up above. The train jest got through afore the fire reached the track. 'N', Phil, she's up there? She's gone! She'll never come back!"

"She? Who? Up where?" Phil's fingers were clinched about the boy's arm.

"Barb'ra Prime!" Thad cringed from the pain in his arm. "She went up to the old shack up there long ago 'n' she ain't come back! She'll never come back!"

Even as he spoke, Nick, the big brown horse, came galloping down the road, the broken lines dangling in front of him, one shaft of the cart clattering behind him. Panting, snorting with terror, he was racing toward them, but Phil, out in the road now, caught at the leather line. He was jerked almost from his feet, but he held and stopped the beast. Cutting the straps from the dragging shaft, he threw himself upon the horse, turned him back and dashed off up the road. Through the group of watching men and women he raced, vouchsafing no word, hearing no protest, straight on toward the wall of fire.

"Phil's gone! Phil'll never come back!" shrieked Thad Weverill, jumping up and down. The words penetrated the brain of a man who, dazed by the horror that he saw before him, possessed of even less than his wonted sense, had crouched from the house to the gate and out upon the road.

"Phil's gone," he screamed, in a wavering echo of the boy's words. "Phil's gone! Phil'll never come back!"

Up the road he went, running, panting, fleet almost as the big brown horse. But at the group of human beings, his course was stayed.

"Phil's gone!" he shouted. "Phil'll never come back! Let me go! I must follow him!"

A dozen men of the Cayucos cañon caught him and held him, still struggling, screaming, until, felled and

stilled by exhaustion, they laid him down on the bank beside the road.

How long Barbara Prime sat crouched on the attic floor she did not know, but she did know that she had cried until her throat was parched and dry. Her first realization of any physical feeling in herself was the agonizing ache in her own throat. Lifting her head from her hands, she saw that the attic had grown dark, that, even through the dirt-grimed window, the daylight showed grim and lowering. The wind was roaring as she had never heard the winter's wind on the cliffs, aided and abetted by the clamor of the waves. She rose hurriedly to her feet, thinking that a sudden, violent storm must have swept up the valley.

Not stopping even to gather up the letters that had fallen on the floor, she descended the ladder. Before her feet touched the boards she was gasping for breath. Turning, she faced the open door and shrank appalled from the vision that confronted her.

A wall of flames, reaching from crest to crest across the valley, was bearing down upon her, lurid, hot and fierce. Across the corn-stubbed meadow, over which she had walked, liquid rivers of fire were running toward her. She slammed the door merely to shut out some of the horror that she saw, not realizing the value of the act.

She rushed to the back of the house, but found that, there, the door and windows had been boarded up. For just a moment she stood and pounded on them, but her small fists produced no visible results. The attic offered no definite refuge, but she climbed to it again and flung down the heavy trapdoor. At least the air up there was cooler than that in the room below. Rushing to the window, she tried to raise it; but it was a single sash and resisted every effort. Even while she worked on it, she could see, not two hundred yards in front of her, a line of men lighting countless fires in the brush; running on farther and farther away from her, they lit others and yet others.

She tried to scream to them, but her voice rang in her own ears only as a tinkling bell in the volume, the rush and roar of the flames. She seized the framework of the window and shook it violently. It was a casement, opening in, and it yielded to her onslaught. Leaning out through the aperture, she saw that the fires in the grass had swept beyond the house, had met behind it and were running on. She was hemmed in by a seething sea of fire. At that instant she heard a shout, heard her own name called aloud.

"Barbara! Are you there?"

Leaning out, she saw Phil Martin running toward her straight through the burning grass that licked about his boots and strove to climb to something more inflammable. His face was black and scorched. One sleeve of his shirt was burned quite away.

"Oh, thank God, thank God!" he cried. "No, no, girl, don't jump." Even as he ran toward her, he directed her. "Climb through if you can and sit as far out on the sill as possible. I will reach you and lift you down."

At the back, the cabin was raised some five feet from the ground on wooden piles. Climbing these, Martin clung to the wooden clapboards as a cat might cling, and mounted toward her. Barbara, sitting far out on the sill, holding fast to the casement with her hand, let herself down until his arm could encircle her waist. Then, half sliding, half jumping, he bore her to the ground. Faint and weak, she clung to him, but he held her off.

"We must run for it," he panted.

"But where, where?" she moaned. "Don't you see? Can't you see?"

She pointed to the fires ahead of them that had been started by the men in order to backfire the oncoming conflagration. These were joining forces now, running, leaping, flaming up, even as the wall of fire behind them.

Martin did not stop to answer her. Half leading her, half carrying her, he ran on. Barbara exerted every force to keep up with him, endeavoring not to impede his progress. But she saw no place of safety. Martin, however, knew

that at one of the springs a cistern, some six or eight feet deep, had been sunk into the ground. Only two days before, he had lifted the rotten, water-logged cover and seen that it held but two feet of water. He knew that there was a chance, faint and slight though it might be, that Barbara, at least, might find safety there. He urged her on. But Barbara hung a dead weight on his arm. Lifting her from the ground, he sped on in a mad race with the maddest of the elements.

Almost exhausted, almost fainting from the heat and the burden that he bore, he reached the thicket of chaparral and manzanita. He lifted the heavy cover from the cistern and, with Barbara close clasped in his arms, slid down into the slimy depths. The wooden lid closed above them. The brush was damp and might burn so slowly that the boards would dry and yield to the flames. Yet there was a chance, faint and small, that the fire might pass over them and leave them safe.

The water rose above his knees. Exhausted as he was, he could not hold Barbara out of it. Its chilling touch restored her to consciousness; but the darkness, the dank pool in which she stood filled her with terror. She would have shrieked aloud, but Martin's hand held hers, Martin's voice was in her ears.

"Oh, where am I?" she sobbed.

"Safe, I hope," he murmured.

"Has the fire stopped?" Even as she asked the question, they heard the crash of the falling cabin.

"There goes the house!" Phil muttered.

Barbara shuddered and leaned against him.

"And only a moment ago I was sitting there reading— Oh, the letters are burned!"

"Letters!" Phil repeated the word mechanically. In the slimy darkness that surrounded them, the chaos that roared and shrieked above them, the almost certain death ahead of them, letters seemed curiously valueless.

Barbara felt no terror, though. She

knew that Phil had rescued her from the death she had seen advancing upon her. She knew that she was safe with him and she answered almost quietly:

"Yes, letters from your mother to mine. I found them only now in the attic." Again she shuddered against him, but only slightly this time. "It is so strange—I have been so possessed for days and days to find something definite of my mother's, and I have searched and searched. Only to-day I found the letters. It is all so queer—it may be so horrible."

From the hand that she laid on his arm Phil shrank as from a blow.

"Horrible? What may be horrible?" he asked.

"Oh, if I only had the letters!" she answered. "Your mother and father—they were rich, rich. They had everything. Mine had nothing. The last letter of all told of your birth, how glad she was, how proud and joyous your father was—she said—she said he seemed a very god in his strength and happiness! Don't you see? Oh, it was such a short time after that—you said your mother brought you here when you were only a baby—that your father was then as he is now! Don't you see, I say? What had happened? Oh, what could have happened?"

The last words were only breathed against his cheek. He had caught her in his arms and was holding her close.

"Oh, my beloved, my beloved!" he whispered.

Barbara could not understand the new force, the new passion that held her, could not realize that, in her own search for some evidence of her mother's life and love, she had found the key that unlocked the heavy bars that Phil Martin had laid across his heart. The letters had proved his right to love her even as he did love her.

For a few moments she lay still in his arms. She could hear the snapping and crackling of the twigs and branches as they burned. The air in the cistern was full of smoke and steam. She moved restlessly. For the first time she questioned the safety of the asylum they had found.

"I am suffocating, Phil," she whispered.

"I am sure that it will pass us by, beloved." His words quieted her fears, but even as he spoke them his own courage failed.

She slipped her arms about his neck and pressed her cheek close to his.

"I am not afraid now," she whispered. "I shall not mind now, but, oh, if you hadn't come! If I had been there all alone! Oh, to think what it would have been then!"

Again she shuddered convulsively. Again his voice quieted her.

Annie Lane, hurrying with all the crowd about her up the Cayucos cañon, knew that her own house was doomed, knew a little later that it was gone, the house, the barn, the orchard, all the work of all the years of her husband's hands and of her own. She hardly gave a thought to this, however. Her one overpowering anxiety was to find her husband.

Looking from one neighbor to another, she read in every eye a suspicion so strong that it was almost a certain knowledge. Hiram Lane was nowhere to be seen. No one of the Sylvas was in the crowd that watched the fire. They might have gone ahead with the gang of men who had been sent to back the fire farther up in the hills, but Annie Lane was still searching and searching. Her steps were stayed, though, by Thad Weverill.

"She's up there," he yelled, jumping up and down, flinging his arms about his head like some small imp of the inferno round about him, "she'll never come back! Her 'n' Phil Martin'll never come back; neither of 'em'll ever come back."

Seizing him by the shoulders, holding him still or shaking him as a terrier would shake a rat, Mrs. Lane demanded who and what he meant. Through his chattering teeth, the boy told his story connectedly as he could. He detailed Barbara's visit, mentioned her demand for water, and gave her message.

Like a flash every thought of herself, of Hiram, of her home, fled from the



woman's mind. Her nursling, the baby she had held in her arms, the child she had cared for was there, in that furnace of fire. Down on her knees she fell and prayed aloud for her safety.

A moment later, a great shout rose from the lips of the men and women who were crowding close on the track of the flames.

"They're back, they're back," screamed Thad Weverill. "They did come back, after all!"

It was into Annie Lane's outstretched arms that Phil Martin gave the girl he had rescued, it was on Annie Lane's breast that Barbara Prime sobbed out her tears of nervous terror and relief. A few hours later, it was Annie Lane who drove her home, away from that upper half of the cañon where the hills on either side and the mountain at the back lay like some city in hell pillared with flaming torches.

## CHAPTER XII.

Youth, a perfect constitution and nerves that had never been racked or tormented would, under ordinary circumstances, have brought a quick recovery to Barbara Prime even after so trying an adventure as the fire in the Cayucos cañon. Now, however, her heart was overflowing with a joy that blotted from her eyes the sights they had seen, shut from her ears the sounds they had heard, drove from her brain the thoughts that had surged into it up in the old attic with Elizabeth Martin's letters in her hands. She hardly realized that body or brain had been taxed at all. She only knew that Phil Martin loved her even as she loved him.

She had heard nothing from her father. Already he seemed a part infinitesimally small in her life. She longed for his return, though, longed to tell him of the change that had come into her world, her universe. She feared nothing as the result of this telling because she cared absolutely not at all what it might be. She realized only that, until he had been told, she and Phil must wait.

It was high noon in the garden, the

second noon since the fire, and a light sea fog was drifting home. Barbara had been lying in a long bamboo chair on the veranda, watching the white wisps of vapor slip from the high eucalyptus trees on the outer edge of the road. A little weary and a little weak, she closed her eyes. For a few moments she slept, but she was roused by the patter of bare feet on the gravel, by Thad Weverill's high, shrill voice. The boy flung himself at her chair.

"I rid down all alone," he shouted. "I rid Hi Lane's old Mat. Phil sent me. He sent me with this to you 'n' he says you're to send him one." With a fine air of importance, he drew a note from the pocket of his shirt and handed it to her.

The note was short.

Send me just one line to tell me how you are. If you cannot write let some one do it for you. Every moment that passes is an agony of suspense, yet I cannot go to you. My father is desperately ill. I cannot leave him even for an hour.

Ten minutes later Thad was riding back over the road, another note in his pocket, a new importance on his face. Half an hour later, Barbara herself followed him.

Theodore Martin had not recovered from the shock of the fire, from the agony of seeing his son disappear behind the wall of smoke and flame. He had hardly regained consciousness. Incessantly he shrieked aloud for Phil.

"Phil is gone, Phil will never come back!" On the son's tired mind, the words beat with wearisome iteration.

"If only he could sleep, even for half an hour," he muttered. "If he doesn't, I cannot leave him, even to see her. I cannot let her come here. I cannot let her see this."

Barbara's note, brought to him a few moments before by Thad, had relieved his anxiety about her, but it had added a new poignancy to his realization of the difference between her life and his. She had said that she would come to him, but he could not let her enter the cabin and see, closer than she had ever



seen it before, the wretched squalor of his existence.

A light footstep fell on the veranda, and some one entered the cabin. Martin turned quickly and saw Barbara coming toward him. Her eyes were on him. They saw nothing but him.

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" she murmured. Her arms were around his neck, her lips against his.

He tried to stand between her and the gray object on the bed.

"Phil, Phil is gone! Phil will never come back!" wailed the sick voice.

"You must go, sweetheart, go at once," urged Phil. "I cannot go with you. You see I cannot leave him. He has been like this ever since that terrible afternoon. I must stay with him. I must help him if I can."

"You have had no rest?" Barbara's voice asked the question even as her eyes read the answer on his face. "It was to save me that you went into the fire. It was on my account that this—this came to him."

She went closer to the bed and looked down upon the wreck that lay there. Kneeling beside the bed, she laid her cool hands over the staring, unseeing eyes.

"I will stay with him, Phil, I will take care of him, and you must rest, you must sleep." As if some magic lay in the ministering fingers, the querulous voice grew quiet, the groping hands lay still. "See, am I not a good nurse?" A rueful little smile parted her lips. "Please, dear, sleep, and I will call you if I need you."

Phil knew that every atom of his own strength would be needed in the watching and waiting that might endure for days, and he yielded to her words even as his father had yielded to her touch.

The sun moved on toward the west. The shadows of the cabin stretched farther out across the green alfalfa that grew in front of it. Barbara watched a bar of yellow sunlight creep slowly across the floor of the outer room, and always her firm young hands held domination over the sick man. Quietly and regularly his breath came and went.

Then suddenly he moved a little, sighed wearily, and Barbara felt his eyelids flutter under her fingers. She lifted her hands and, bending over him, saw that the eyes that gazed at her were no longer staring, senseless things, were no longer wild and hostile.

He tried to raise his hand, but it fell back upon the blanket.

"I have been ill?" The voice was weak but not querulous at all. Instead, it was gentle, soft, refined.

"Yes, very, very ill, Mr. Martin," Barbara answered gently.

"But where am I?" He spoke again. "Who—who are you?"

"I am a friend of Phil's." She answered only the second question. "I am the girl Phil is going to marry."

"To marry! But Phil is—is only a bab—" The eyes were searching her face. "I—I have been ill so long as that?" He read the answer in her eyes. "And she—she is not here—where is she?"

"No, she is not here." The tender sympathy in Barbara's voice answered him even more plainly than her words did. "She—she has not been here for a very long time. Phil has taken care of you all these years."

"She—she is waiting for me, then." His eyes closed again. He lay so still that the girl thought he must have fallen asleep. In a few moments, though, he spoke again. "Did you tell me where I am—what place this is?"

"It is a little ranch in the hills, a ranch belonging to—to David Prime." Barbara ventured the name timorously.

"David Prime! Ah, God in Heaven, I remember it all now!" The man's eyes flashed, the voice gurgled in his swelling throat. He tried to raise himself, but fell back weak and helpless. "I—I must—"

Barbara rose from her knees, hurried to the door and called to Phil. In a moment he came in.

"I am afraid he is worse," she cried. "Please go for Annie Lane. I want her. Bring her to me so that I can stay."

"But I cannot leave you here alone with him! Let me see—"

"Oh, no, no, no! I am not afraid, dear, not in the least afraid. Please go at once for Annie. She will know what to do."

She did not even wait to see if he went, but turned and knelt again by the bed. Theodore Martin opened his eyes.

"Where is Phil?" The voice was weaker, fainter.

"He is not here," Barbara faltered. "He will be here soon."

"I must see him, must tell him, now, while it is all clear, while I remember." The words were hurrying over the dry, parched lips. "There may be something for him to do."

"Can you not tell it to me?" whispered Barbara. "I am to marry Phil. Surely you can tell me and I—I will tell him."

"I—I do not know," the words faltered. "This—this place belongs to David Prime, you said. Is—is *he* alive?"

"Yes."

"And Phil is—Phil is here." The eyes were wandering, now, about the hideous, squalid room.

"Phil has lived here, always, since he was a very little boy." Barbara's answer roused some new thought or memory in the man's brain.

"Can you write, girl?" he asked. "If you can, get paper and ink and let me tell it to you, all, all of it, while I can remember, while there is still time."

Barbara had seen a pad of paper and some pencils lying on the table. Bringing them, she knelt again by the bed and rested the pad on the rough red blanket that covered the man's wasted frame.

"David Prime—write quickly as you can, girl—David Prime—if only I knew where to begin!" He breathed impatiently, and Barbara waited. "David Prime and I were boys together, grew up together, married at the same time, and came together—I don't even know where I am, now, but we went West together. He—had no money, but I had more than enough for all of us—I bought quarries, stone quarries—that is, I gave him the money to buy them—we worked there together, for—for ten

years. We made money. Are you writing it just as I tell you? I gave him his half—I let him invest my half for me—in—in land—that he said would increase wonderfully in value. During the last year or two he was away a great deal. He even took his wife and children away—to some place farther south. In one of his absences—I learned—I heard it first and then investigated and proved it absolutely—that he had never bought anything for me—that even the quarries did not stand in my name. He came back—I—I thought perhaps he could explain it in some way—I did not want to tax him with it at the house—before my wife—I asked him to go to the quarry with me." Barbara's head had drooped so low over the paper that, lying flat as he was, he could not see it. "Are you there? Are you writing?"

"Yes," she faltered.

"He denied it—denied everything—oh, if only he had tried to explain to me—it would have been so easy to make me believe, but he denied it—I knew that he was lying—because I had seen the papers. I told him that he must give me back everything that was mine—that then he must go. He—he picked up an iron bar that was lying on the rocks—I saw that he was going to strike me and— That is all—I will sign it—and you will give it to Phil. Phil must—" He struggled to rise, but fell back. "Quick, girl, or it may be too late."

Barbara, her fingers cold almost as his, gave him the pencil and held the paper while he wrote his name.

The gray shadows crept from the high cheek bones down to the lips. He lay so still that Barbara wondered if he even breathed. Suddenly he roused once more.

"He killed her!" he muttered. "Killed my life even while I lived, and brought my boy to this! Damn him, damn his soul!"

Barbara's fingers rested on his lips before the words had passed them.

"Oh, please, please—not that!" she moaned. "For the love of mercy, don't say that!"

She still crouched by the bed. As he grew quieter, she let her head drop upon her folded arms. It was worse, a thousand times worse than anything that she had imagined.

She was startled by the slow movement of fingers across her hair.

"Are you there, girl? I—I cannot see."

The room, golden in the light of the sun's last rays, was so dazzlingly bright that Barbara's own eyes were dazed. She looked down at the face on the pillow. The eyes were already sunken. The lips moved feebly.

"Phil is not here?"

"No, he has not come yet," she answered.

"Will you—pray with me—girl—Phil's wife?" Not waiting for her to answer, he began, in a voice, weak and faltering at first but growing stronger, growing almost clear, toward the end. "'Our Father, which art in Heaven.' " Barbara's lips followed his, taking the words from them. "'Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come—Thy will be done—on earth—as it is—in Heaven. Give us this day—our daily—bread and—forgive us—forgive us—our trespasses—as we—forgive those—that trespass against us.'" The voice stopped for a long moment. "'Forgive us our trespasses—as we forgive—those that—trespass against us.'" There was another silence broken only by the sobs that Barbara could not still. "Dear Lord in Heaven, forgive me—my trespasses—as I forgive David Prime! Phil!"

"Father!"

Phil had entered the cabin, had heard his father and the girl he loved praying, had heard all his father's last words. He caught him in his strong young arms and held him close.

"Phil!" Once again he spoke the name, then murmured brokenly: "Elizabeth."

A moment later Annie Lane slipped her arms about Barbara's waist.

"Shure, there's nothing more yez can do, darlint," she said as she lifted the girl to her feet and led her from the room. "It's more fit that I should do

what's to be done now than fer him to be doin' it, an' he can take yez home."

Alone in the twilight, Barbara waited. She heard Annie Lane moving about in the house, heard Phil come out from his father's room, saw him light the lamp. There was a short silence. Then Phil came out on to the porch and took her close into his arms. Shuddering, she clung to him.

"I heard my father's last words, my beloved," he whispered.

"Oh, I can't bear it, I can't bear it at all," she cried. "I can't forgive him. I never can forgive him. I don't see how your father, even then, could. You don't know. You don't understand, or you wouldn't even speak to me."

"I do know, I do understand, dear," he answered. "I saw the paper lying there on the floor. I picked it up and read it."

She pushed him away from her.

"Oh, you have read it," she sobbed. "Of course, though, it was meant for you to read. Don't you see? He, my father, did that awful thing. I can see it all plainly. He went back and said that there had been an accident. He claimed everything. He took everything. He put your poor mother here when all of it, everything belonged to her. It was all hers, all your father's. It is all yours now, and I—I am the one to go and tell him that I know, that you know, that the whole world must know."

"No, dear," he answered. "I don't believe that you need to tell him. I don't believe that any one need know. See, here is the paper. I don't want it." As he spoke, he tore it into tiny bits and threw them away. "Holding my dead father in my arms I realized that his mind had been restored to him just at the end for some great reason. I knew that David Prime must have wronged him grievously. Yet in my heart of hearts I forgave him, even as my father had forgiven him, in my heart that belongs all to you, beloved. How could I hold you in my heart, sweetheart, if I did not forgive the man who is your father? Perhaps it is just because I love you that I do forgive him, Barbara.

And so, dear, can't you forgive him, too?"

His arms were about her, his lips rested on her hair where his father's hand had rested when he prayed to be forgiven, when he prayed even for forgiveness for David Prime.

"I cannot, I cannot!" she sobbed. "There is no forgiveness for sin like that."

"I believe in the forgiveness of sin." The sin is not qualified or quantified, dear. We would not be told to ask for it if it were not to be granted. Won't you say it with me, sweetheart, as you said it just now with him? 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us.' Forgive me my trespasses even as I forgive David Prime."

Her lips pressed close against his cheek, she whispered the words after him. Then she slipped from his arms and, kneeling on the porch, rested her head on its wooden railing.

"Forgive him," she whispered, "oh, if he can be forgiven, forgive him!"

### CHAPTER XIII.

From Santa Barbara David Prime went to Los Angeles and back into the hills of San Bernardino, making brief stops at each of his ranches and mines. Then he turned north again. Arrived at the Visalia ranch, he was undecided whether to go home or to keep on farther to the north where he had more mines, more ranches, and more quarries. At this stopping place, however, he heard of the fiery destruction in the Cayucos cañon. Divining at once the human vengeance that had kindled and fanned the flames, he started without delay for the scene of the disaster.

In the village he stopped long enough to change his wearied horses for a pair of fresh colts that he had sent up from the Visalia ranch during his first stay there. At his house he stopped long enough to hear that Barbara had been in the fire; that, only an hour before, she had gone again up to the Cayucos.

Only half broken, the bay colts he drove sped over the ground, swerving

to right or to left at every shadow, at every sound, swinging the light buggy now against the bank, now out over the precipice that dropped hundreds of feet to the winding river below.

There were no clouds overhead, there were no trees on either side, but queer shadows were passing in front of David Prime's eyes. The road entered the trees again, and now red flashes of light appeared from time to time, starting nowhere, ending nowhere, but flaming, scarlet and blue.

A tiny cottontail burst from the brush and, right under the colts' noses, dashed across the way. They flung up their heads, shied violently and flung the buggy against a stump of a tree that upheld the bank. Prime lurched with the lurching vehicle and, marvelously escaping the wheels, plunged down on to the ground. The colts ran on up the road, into the burnt section of the cañon. There, their way impeded by the heavy ashes under their feet, they quieted down. The dragging lines caught around a fallen tree and held them fast. They had passed no one on the road. No one had seen them.

David Prime lay where he had fallen. He was not even conscious, just at first, that he had fallen. He only knew that he was cold. He only felt that he could no longer endure the throbbing in his side. After a few seconds, though, he realized that he was lying prone in the road. With an instinct of self-preservation that was wholly animal, he crawled toward the low bank and struggled up to its top.

Goaded rather by some primeval instinct to seek a shelter than with any idea of finding help, he crawled on toward the cabin that stood a little way inside the fence. He came first to some steps that led up to a porch. He knew that he could not mount them, so he dragged himself on, circling the shanty. At the back, he found a door that swung in under the weight of his shoulder. Another effort and he was inside the room, lying face down on the floor, gasping for breath. At the instant, his dulled brain felt only a sense of contentment. His last goal was won,

won by the sheer force of his own determination not to die—yes, that was it—not to die, out in the open like a rat—no, even a rat would seek its hole—like some craven cur!

His throat was dry, horribly dry. He could not swallow at all. He wanted water. Desperately he wanted water, a drop of water. He tried to crawl to another door that he saw, but he could no longer move himself along the floor.

Thad Weverill, hopping on one foot along the road, saw that the back door of the cabin that had been his home was swinging to and fro in the wind. Vaulting over the fence, he ran toward it to fasten it, but, his hand on the latch, he stopped short. A man was lying on the floor, drunk—or dead.

Thad entered the cabin with no hesitation and stood looking down at the man on the floor. He even touched one of the outsprawled arms tentatively with his bare toe. Prime's eyes turned toward him.

"Water!" He tried to speak the word. No sound issued from his lips, but the boy read the word as it lay there.

"Water," he answered, "the' ain't no water here." He squatted down on his heels. "We lived here onst 'n' we got our water outen the creek that comed down through Hi Lane's. The' ain't no water in it now, cause ole Prime—Gee! I guess yo're old Prime hisself, ain't yer?"

Prime, his mind energized for the moment by this unexpected contact with another human being, even though it was only this ragged unkempt boy, remembered his last act of vengeance against Hiram Lane—Hiram Lane, the husband of Barbara's old nurse.

"I guess y'ain't drunk." Thad was still talking. "I thought a' first yo' was."

Again Prime's lips formed the one word "water."

"I tell yo', the' ain't no water here," Thad answered. "'N' I guess anyways yo're dying. I seen dad die 'n' he looked like that, kinder gray 'n' blue."

Prime, with a last supreme effort, turned his face away from the boy's

contemplative eyes. The room was growing dark now, but Thad, not in any way afraid, sat still haunched on his heels. Into his mind there flashed a sudden memory of Barbara Prime. Curiously connected with the memory was a recollection of the glass of milk she had given him that very morning.

"I guess she'd like yo' t' have some water 'f I could get it fer yo'," he said at last. "I guess, perhaps, I can bring some in my cap from the Cayucos. It holds a lot 'f it don't all spill out. Wait here," he commanded, and went out, leaving the man once more alone.

Wait! David Prime ground his teeth now in the agony that possessed him. How long would he have to wait before the end came?

It seemed to him that hours passed before the boy returned, and yet in less than five minutes Thad was kneeling beside him again. In his hands he held his cap, filled almost to the brim with water.

"I guess yo' can't drink it after all," the boy exclaimed. "I guess yo' can't lift yer head, can yer? Dad couldn't. Jest wait, though, 'n' I'll fix yo'."

The cap was made of tarpaulin and was stiff. Thad set it carefully on the floor. With all his strength he rolled the man over on his back. The agony was almost unendurable. The leash of the soul was almost severed. The boy, dipping his grimy hand into the cap, raised a little water in his palm and poured it between Prime's gasping lips. Again and again he carried the paltry drops of water in this manner and let them trickle down into the dry throat.

"Don't—leave—me—again!"

With a superhuman effort, David Prime spoke the words so that Thad could hear them. With a superhuman effort he lifted one of his own hands and clasped the ministering fingers.

"Oh, don't yer worry 'bout that," answered Thad. "I guess she'd like me to wait."

And so, watched over and tended by a homeless waif, rendered homeless by his own evil deeds, in the meanest hovel that stood on all his broad acres, David Prime died. His cowering soul slipped



out, shuddering, hiding its face from the Master-owner who stood waiting to claim his own.

"Forgive him, oh, if he can be forgiven, forgive him!"

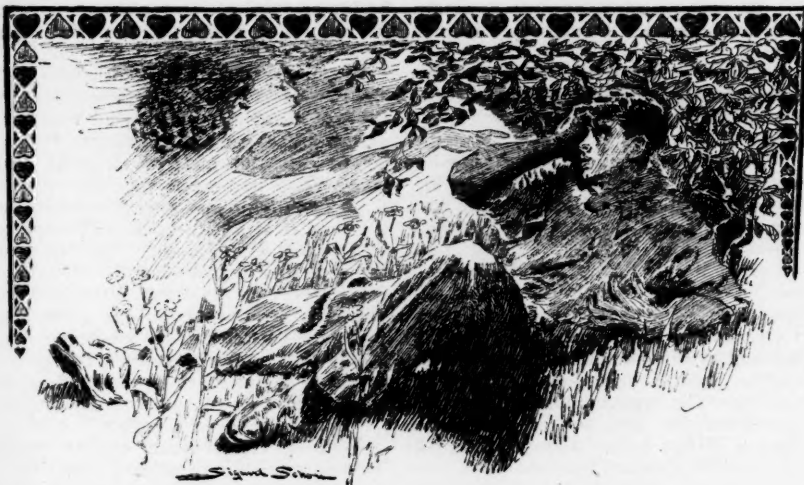
It was Barbara's voice, and the soul of David Prime, that knew nothing of the power even of earthly love, stood aghast. Of a surety, though, it was Barbara's voice, rising up, beseeching, imploring, increasing in volume until it was like a chorus of angelic voices.

"Forgive him, oh, if he can be forgiven, forgive him!"

Under the starlit sky, Phil Martin drove Barbara home, away from the burnt desolation of the Cayucos cañon; past the old Weverill cabin that offered

no sign of the tragedy that was being enacted within its walls; down on to the broad plain; through the village, and up to the house on the cliffs. There was no moonlight now to shed its lustre over them as there had been on that night when he had brought the girl home from their island prison; but, now as then, the garden welcomed them with its warm soft fragrance, and sleepy birds twittered reproachfully from rose-bush and lilac-hedge.

For a moment they stood together on the steps, his arms around her, her lips close to his. From the rose May tree a sound was uttered, a faint stir in a bird's throat, and then the nightingale, that even in its sleep dreams of love, told its dream to the night.



### At Sunset.

GOD speed thee, Sun! Thou hast not gone to rest.  
Thine is a mission infinitely blest—  
To stand, and serve, to shed thy light alway,  
And bathe in splendor the Eternal Day.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.





# Her Day Off

by Kate  
Whiting  
Patch

ILLUSTRATED BY  
H. VON S. LUCAS

HER first "day off" confronted her and little Miss Lucy did not know what to do with it. The other nurses were always so exuberantly happy when their days off came around, and Miss Lucy felt shy under their eager scrutiny of her day—that day which looked so big and long and lonely as she stared wistfully into the face of its meagre possibilities. She had been at the sanitarium only a month; her friends all lived down in New Jersey, and Massachusetts was as yet a great desert—full of historical interests, no doubt, but with never a friendly hand in it for her claspings nor a hospitable door to fly eagerly open at her knock.

Where should she go? Miss Lucy debated this question as she braided her hair for the night on the eve of the allotted day.

"Oh you lucky little Miss Lucy!" exclaimed one of the other girls. They all called her that. It had been "Miss Lucy" at first, to distinguish her from the other Miss Brown who, as head nurse, was entitled to her surname by right of precedence; but there was

something about Lucy Brown's round face and wide-open blue eyes, her puckered red lips with the childish droop to them, her meekly parted dark hair and slender little figure, that made people want to pet her; and soon she was "little Miss Lucy" to patients and nurses alike.

"Where are you going?" asked the other nurse with interest, and Miss Lucy jumped desperately at a decision.

"I guess I'll take a trolley ride," she said, "and go to see Concord and Lexington."

"Well, that'll be pleasant," agreed the other cordially, but she looked a little sorry for Miss Lucy. This particular nurse had a young man who took care of her holidays, and she was crossing off the dates on her calendar until her free day should come again.

Little Miss Lucy set off in the morning with small thought of adventure in her timid heart. She was rather glad to get away from dull routine for a whole day; to be wearing her own clothes instead of her uniform; to feel the fresh fall breezes on her cheek, and to catch the pungent fragrance of burn-

ing leaves; but she was a little afraid of the freedom before her. Concord and Lexington would be interesting, of course, "but I wish there was some one to go with me," sighed little Miss Lucy. She didn't aspire to a young man, like Miss Masden—a nice cozy girl comrade would do very well; and she shook a tear from her eyelash as the faces of far-away school chums flashed before her.

"But perhaps it will be a pleasanter day than I think. Things usually come out so," murmured Miss Lucy to herself as she hailed her car.

## II.

Robert Kidder, M. D., sat in his pleasant little office waiting for a patient to turn in at Mrs. Madison's garden gate. Every afternoon, since the first of July, he had sat by the same window in the same new office chair, contemplating the garden gate and waiting for the patient—not any particular patient, but *the* patient—The First Patient, always referred to in capital letters by the newly fledged M. D.

Doctor Kidder had received his diploma in June, and had repaired to this sylvan village where a good opening, or so he had been assured, awaited the right sort of practitioner. He had found shelter, after much tactful persuading, under Mrs. Madison's comfortable roof-tree; had set up his household gods and hung out a modest "shingle." When he was not keeping office hours and watching for the arrival of The Patient, he drove about the country to exercise his pretty sorrel mare and acquaint himself with the roads and residences of possible future patrons.

But inaction was beginning to tell upon the young man. In the intervals of watching for The Patient he scowled dismally into the eyes of Fate and demanded satisfaction.

"What am I here for, anyway?" he growled. "Either this is a desperately healthy community—I wonder old Ponce de Leon didn't find it in his search for eternal youth—or I'm not

the right sort of practitioner. It is very evident nobody wants my services."

At that moment the garden gate slammed, and that startling, hitherto doomed-to-disappointment sound, was not created, as usual, by the butcher or the baker, nor yet by the iceman, but by an excited little boy who raced up the gravel-path and, mounting to the porch, several steps at a time, nearly pulled out the bell handle in his hurry. At the alarmed jangle Robert Kidder left off staring into the eyes of Fate, and hastily putting on his professional dignity, sauntered to the door.

"What's the matter?" he asked of the panting youth.

"Lady hurt; fell off car; can't get up; come right off!"

Doctor Kidder turned back to pick up his emergency satchel, that had not seen an emerging for so long, and the gleam of action burned joyfully in his dark eyes.

"Now then—where?" he asked briskly as he joined the breathless boy.

The little mare stood harnessed by the gate, and, directed by his young guide, the doctor drove quickly to the village square.

The "lady" had been removed to the musty little drug store, as a slender crowd about the doorway testified. Doctor Kidder left the boy in charge of the horse, and quickly passed through the bystanders with that air of authority which for so long had remained unexercised.

The injured lady was sitting in a wooden chair, brooded over by the apothecary and one or two sympathetic women, and the flush on her pretty face was proof positive that she did not enjoy her position as leading lady.

At Doctor Kidder's approach the others stepped back, and he felt all eyes critically surveying him as he, in his turn, took the centre of the stage; but he forgot them all in his concern for this, his first patient.

"May I help you?" he asked, bending over the little figure in the chair.

Little Miss Lucy lifted her great blue, child-like eyes, and the doctor sud-

denly felt that he was looking down into two clear mirrors that reflected only the purity of the heavens.

"Oh, thank you," said the girl. "If you are a doctor perhaps you can tell me what is the matter; I slipped as I stepped off the car—the step was so high for me—and I did something to my ankle, and fell."

The bystanders listened in breathless attention, and again Doctor Kidder saw the color rise in those soft cheeks.

"I will take you to my office," he said promptly. "Then we can see."

Miss Lucy looked relieved. "But I don't believe I can walk," she hesitated.

"Of course not; my horse is here. Please stand aside," to the interested populace. And stooping he lifted the little lady in his arms; in a moment had deposited her on the seat of the buggy, and, taking the reins from the gaping boy, drove rapidly away.

"A smart fellow that," observed the apothecary sagely; and the bystanders agreed.

"He's up on all the latest methods, I'll wager," added the grocer, who had stepped in to see what was going on.

"Yes, indeed," and "you bet," echoed an admiring chorus.

Meanwhile little Miss Lucy was murmuring gratefully: "Oh, thank you. It was dreadful to be stared at so." And the doctor was saying: "Of course, but then one can hardly blame them. Things so seldom happen here, and besides—" But they had reached Mrs. Madison's gate, and he did not finish his sentence.

Miss Lucy was soon deposited in an easy-chair, and the doctor was manipulating the poor little foot and making her suffer abominably.

"It's a shame," he said, "but we must find out just what is wrong."

At the close of the examination Mrs. Madison, who had hovered about in the background, was dispatched for hot water while the doctor got out bandages.

"Is it very bad?" asked Miss Lucy anxiously.

"There are no broken bones," was the

reply, "and I do not believe it is a genuine sprain, but you have twisted the ligaments in some way. Hot fomentations and bandages will probably help, but you must not use the foot for twenty-four hours at least."

"Twenty-four hours! Oh, what am I to do?" exclaimed poor Miss Lucy.

"Are you far from home?" asked the doctor.

"Yes, at least I'm not at home. I'm a nurse at a sanitarium, and I was having my day off."

"Ah, then you have been with friends for the day. Are they near at hand?"

But Miss Lucy shook her head. "No," she said, "I haven't any friends, about here; I've been spending my day seeing Concord and Lexington, and I was on my way back to the sanitarium. The other girls spend the night away when they have their free day. I could, too, of course, but"—she hesitated—"I hadn't any place to go. Are you sure I couldn't get back? It would take me about two hours in the trolley."

The doctor shook his head slowly. "Any changes?" he asked.

"Oh, yes."

"Well, that settles it," was the prompt decision. "If you do not take care that foot may cause much trouble."

The hot water had arrived, and the doctor was too busy to notice the slow tears that had gathered in the wide blue eyes, but he looked up from the bandaging as Miss Lucy was furtively wiping them away.

"Have I hurt you so?" he asked contritely, but she shook her head.

"It is very silly," she explained. "I'm ashamed to cry over it, but I don't know just what I'm going to do."

"Do? You will stay here, of course. Mrs. Madison will take care of you; won't you, Mrs. Madison? You see, Miss—"

"Brown—Lucy Brown."

"Miss Lucy Brown can't possibly go away to-night with the aid of this injured member, and she has no friends near at hand."

Mrs. Madison gasped, but a glance at the round baby face and pathetic eyes warmed the mother heart in her.



*Where should she go? Miss Lucy debated this question as she braided her hair.*

"Of course she can stay," she agreed cordially. "The front room's all ready, if you can help her up; but perhaps, miss, you'd rather stay down here till after tea?"

"Of course." It was the doctor who replied. "Now, Miss Lucy Brown, let me just take you up gently—so—and deposit you on the couch over there, and I'll start up a cozy blaze on the hearth."

Lucy Brown sank back among the cushions with a little sigh that started to be sad and changed its mind. The painful part of her exploit began to lose itself in a warm sense of present comfort and pleasure. The thrill of adventure stirred her agreeably, and her heart began to beat faster. Little Miss Lucy had been faithfully and lovingly caring for others a long time now, and it was somehow strangely pleasant to be resting in this cozy room, assiduously tended by kindly Mrs. Madison and

this handsome young physician who looked as though he might have a reputation in athletics and yet touched one with such gentle hands. She watched him lay the fire, and as the flames sprang up at last they lighted his earnest dark face and friendly eyes.

He drew up a chair to the blaze and glanced across the hearth brightly.

"Now this is what I call cozy," he said. "I am grateful to you for dropping in, Miss Brown. Mrs. Madison doesn't wholly approve of my passion for wood fires—she never went camping down in Maine, I fancy—but she can't object to-night, for we have company!"

"She is very, very kind to let me stay," exclaimed Miss Lucy, "and so are you, but"—a new fear assailing her—"really I don't need anything more now, and wouldn't you rather I went to my room? I don't want to interfere with your work, and some one might come."

"Who? The reporter of our local paper to inquire after the lady who fell from the car? We won't let him in," he added hastily as the lady looked alarmed.

"I didn't mean that," she said, laughing a little. "But this is your office, and some other patient—"

Doctor Kidder gazed at her reproachfully.

"Don't bring me back to the living present so rudely," he protested. "I have been waiting for you to come these three months, and now you have actually arrived, do you fancy I am willing to forego my little celebration?"

Miss Lucy stared in amazement, and the doctor gazed into her wide blue eyes until his own began to dance. "I see that you doubt my sanity," he observed, "but you can't know what it means to me; to have thirsted in the desert, to have hungered among plenty, to have hoarded one's precious talents

with no opportunity to take them out and polish them—in short—” He arose and bowed low before her. “Let me explain your peculiar position as benefactress to one pining away of inaction; Miss Brown, you have the honor of being my first patient!”

Little Miss Lucy, who had been staring in wonderment, suddenly sank back among the cushions and laughed; all the suppressed fountains of mirth bubbled up in her, and she laughed as she had not allowed herself to laugh since her school days ended. Pretty dimples came and went in her cheeks and fun danced in her eyes; the other nurses would not have known her; and the young physician standing on the hearth-rug laughed with her, but not so heartily that he was oblivious to the dimples.

“Well, I’m glad for once in my life to be a really important personage,” she was surprised to find herself saying. “I can even be glad to have sacrificed my ankle since it has given you so much pleasure.”

Just then entered Mrs. Madison with an ample tray and her daintiest china and preserves, to tempt the invalid’s appetite. She looked a little surprised at the signs of mirth, and then she smiled blandly.

“Doctor’s been cheering you up, hasn’t he?” she said. “He’s always a good hand at that. I often think what a blessing his cheerful disposition must be to his patients. Only the other day when he was off on some country call he—”

But the doctor interrupted her.

“There’s no need for wicked dissimulation here,” he said. “I have just fessed up to Miss Brown that she is my first patient; hence these tears. Mrs. Madison,” he explained, “has imperiled her chances of a harp and halo by the kindly fabrications concerning my growing practice with which she entertains her callers.”

“Now, Doctor Kidder,” remonstrated the good woman, “what stories is he telling the young lady! But your supper’s getting cold, Miss Brown, and so be ours.”

As Miss Lucy drank her tea before

the fire and heard the murmur of voices in the dining room across the hall, a little smile flickered about her lips.

“And it’s my day away,” she murmured half aloud. “Oh, what would the girls say if they could look in on me now!”

And what would “the girls” have said could they have looked in a little later? Mrs. Madison was “doing” the dishes and heating more water at the doctor’s commands, and that jubilant physician had returned to stir up the fire and look out for his patient.

“I’m having a beautiful time,” he declared. “To think of three months with never a symptom to consider or a bit of surgery to nurse.”

“Dear me, I never thought that I should be a ‘case,’” murmured Miss Lucy. “Isn’t anybody ever sick about here, and don’t they have accidents?”

“Apparently not. Hence the excitement when you tumbled off the car, so opportunely. To be sure, several of Mrs. Madison’s acquaintances have expressed a willingness to try me next time they are in need of medical advice; but they seem to be a hardy race. Once, indeed, I did think you had appeared—I am addressing you in the character of first patient, understand—but he turned into a book agent, alas!”

Miss Lucy smiled as her eyes traveled to some well-filled shelves near at hand. “Did you buy the book? Or are those all medical volumes?” she asked.

He laughed and turned to the shelves. “Want to see some of my favorites?” he asked, and soon the invalid was surrounded by volumes and eagerly turning pages while her medical adviser read marked bits here and there, enjoying her ready response.

“I wish Mrs. Madison shared your passion for literature,” he remarked at the end of a pleasant hour. “Do you remember what Thoreau said, that to enjoy reading there must be two, one to read and the other to listen?”

“And both to enjoy,” added the girl, with sudden illumination. That must be the secret of any pleasure, she sud-



denly realized. "Haven't you any one to read with?" she asked.

"No, have you?"

"I'm afraid not," she faltered. "But I hadn't thought of it before. It is more fun."

"Yes, it's more fun," agreed the man. "Most anything is more fun with two—the right two."

"But I haven't much time to read, or many books of my own."

"Do you like your work?" he asked.

"Of course, only——"

"Only what?"

"I can't explain, unless its loneliness, sometimes—a loneliness or something the work alone does not give; perhaps it's wishing for my own people."

"And they are far away?"

"Too far," she agreed.

"Sometimes they are nearer than we know," said the young man gravely. "One's own people are not always the nearest of kin."

"Now, then, here's the hot water, and I think, doctor, that the young lady ought to be settling down for the night." Mrs. Madison bustled in, prepared to play assistant nurse, and the agreeable companion of an evening was suddenly transformed to the impersonal physician much interested in his case. Miss Lucy's ankle was bathed and bandaged once more and she was carried up to Mrs. Madison's front room and assisted by that lady into a durable cotton nightgown several sizes too large for her.

But little Miss Lucy did not care. As her kind hostess departed with the candle, the unexpected occupant of the front room had sunk back among its pillows with a happy sigh.

"And to think that I dreaded my day away," laughed little Miss Lucy softly as she fell asleep.

### III.

"Gone!" Doctor Kidder stood aghast in the presence of his landlady. "You don't mean to say you let her go, Mrs. Madison?"

"I don't know how I could of helped it," returned that good lady, somewhat

aggrieved at the frown which gathered in the doctor's eyes. "You'd just drove off when she came down all dressed. She says how she found her ankle seemed to be all right this morning and she must go back to her work; she was sorry not to say good-bye to you, but she would be late if she waited, and I mistrust she suspicioned you wouldn't let her go. She left a note on your desk."

Doctor Kidder set down his bag and hat, and strode over to the desk. Mrs. Madison lingered as he broke the seal of the little note, but if she had expected to see the contents she was disappointed, although she did observe that a gold piece fell from the folded pages.

"I told her I wouldn't take pay," went on Mrs. Madison, "but she seemed to feel she'd made a sight o' trouble. I told her mebbe 'twas a good thing, that you'd had a call right after breakfast, and the boy who brought it told me that the man at the drug store had recommended you 'cause he liked your ways yesterday."

"This must go back," interrupted the doctor. "Where does Miss Brown live?"

"Well, now, where was it?" ruminated Mrs. Madison thoughtfully. "Let me see—it was Doctor Somebody's sanitarium—Doctor Strong's, I think—no, Doctor Stone—it's funny I can't just recollect the name; but it began with an S or maybe 'twas a W, but it was some doctor's sanitarium."

"But where?" persisted the young man a bit impatiently.

"Well, I don't rightly remember that either," confessed Mrs. Madison. "I'm not sure she mentioned the town, but she said 'twould take her two hours to get there. I remember now, I was going to ask, but Mis' Jennings came in with a mess of corn just then, and when I'd seen to that I was all took up with urging her to stop till you come back. Is the new case likely to be a good one?" she asked, with an abrupt change of subject. Lucy Brown was an incident of the past. The new "case" might be nearer at hand and of more vital import.





"I see that you doubt my sanity," he observed.

"I hope so," replied the doctor shortly, and Mrs. Madison felt vaguely that he desired solitude.

The door closed, the young man again took up the note, and read:

DEAR DOCTOR KIDDER: I feel ashamed to go away without thanking you for your great kindness to the stranger within your gates; but I really must or I shall be late, for I go on duty again at twelve. My ankle is much better this morning, so you must have done just the right thing, and I will save it all I can. I am sure your services have been worth far more than five dollars, but this gold piece is all I have with me except my car fares. Won't you please take it with the gratitude of

YOUR FIRST PATIENT.

Robert Kidder twice read over this important missive, and turned the gold piece thoughtfully in his hand.

"And I can't even thank her," he murmured, with a rueful glance at the fireplace where last night's ashes still lay like gray memories of a pleasant evening. "The little witch! I believe she did not mean to let us know her whereabouts. She was afraid I would return this. It was some present to her, I suppose, poor child! She knew

I wouldn't touch her little treasure, and the debt was already canceled—if there ever was one."

He glanced again at the ashes and then at the books on the table, lying where she had laid them when she said good night. A smile flashed in his eyes.

"Very well, Miss Lucy Brown," he murmured to the sofa opposite, "I'm much obliged to you, and I'll keep this little gold piece for a lucky penny, but only until I find you, my little lady."

Meanwhile little Miss Lucy was taking off her hat and preparing to don her uniform.

"Did you have a pleasant day?" asked Miss Mason, who was perched on the foot of a cot near by.

"Yes, indeed," replied Miss Lucy. "I've always wanted to visit Concord and Lexington."

The other nurse scrutinized her flushed face narrowly.

"We didn't know you were going to stop overnight," she said.

The color deepened in Miss Lucy's pretty cheeks and she smiled into the

wide blue eyes which met hers in the mirror.

"I didn't expect to, but I found friends," said little Miss Lucy demurely.

#### IV.

Several months had passed since Miss Lucy Brown had accommodately fallen from a trolley car in a quiet New England village and thereby suddenly opened the eyes of its inhabitants to the fact that a brilliant medical practitioner was modestly hiding his talents in their midst. Perhaps it was because of the lucky piece which the doctor always carried in his pocket; but, whatever the cause, his time of waiting was over. Not that he had as yet acquired a really rushing practice, but most of the families who had need of a physician were prompted to "try him," and the climax to these days of promise was reached when Mrs. Madison met him at the door one December afternoon and with ill-suppressed excitement imparted the information that he had been sent for by old Lady Rogers on the hill.

Now old Lady Rogers was as near to being the Great Lady of the community as one ever finds in an American hamlet. She looked after every villager to the extent of giving him unlimited advice, and being quite indignant if he refused to take it, and she was reported to have great wealth to support her in the splendor of her large gloomy house on the hillside. Doctor Kidder had been attending Madam Rogers for a fortnight when he arrived at her door one frosty afternoon to find his patient decidedly restless.

The old lady greeted him querulously. "Late, aren't you?" she demanded.

"Am I?" asked the doctor, drawing off his gloves. "I hope you are better to-day, Madam Rogers."

"Not a mite," returned the old lady sententiously. "I tell you what I'm going to do, young man; I'm going to a sanitarium."

She leaned back in her chair to note the effect of these words, her sharp

eyes peering out from the wrinkled face, her wig and cap a bit awry.

"What you blushing for?" she asked sharply, for the doctor had changed color. "'Tain't because I'm dissatisfied with you. As I told you yesterday, I don't know as you're doing me any good, but I like to talk with you. I'm going to a sanitarium because I want to see what they're like. I never was one to refuse to buy new things, or I shouldn't have called you."

The doctor smiled pleasantly. "I think it's a great idea," he said. "And I'll do my best to help you find the right place."

He was as good as his word. Every day or two he climbed the hill to Madam Rogers' mansion, bearing budgets of prospectuses and pamphlets, and patiently he looked over these with the exacting old lady. His zeal went even further; he offered personally to visit any of these institutions she might designate, preferably those within two hours' journey, and upon these visits of inspection he was careful to inquire as to the nursing service, and keep his dark eyes ever on the alert, for it may as well be confessed at once that Doctor Kidder had not in the stress of present business forgotten the wide blue eyes and round child-like face of his first patient. So far, however, these visits had not proved satisfying. The doctor was beginning to despair, for his lady patient's sake, of course, when one winter morning he found her ready to greet him with an air of victory quivering in her cap ribbons.

"There's no need for you to chafe round the country any more," she said. "I've decided to go here." And she handed him a neat little pamphlet, which he had mailed her the night before.

"Don't you want me to inquire?" he began, but she stopped him short.

"Young man, I told you it was settled. I like the pictures and I like the reading matter. Jane is packing my trunk now, and I've ordered the automobile for two o'clock. Be sure you're here on time. Of course you must go out with me."

"You telephoned, of course, to see if they had a room?"

Madam Rogers stared.

"Have a room? Well, they'll have to have one," she decreed. "I tell you we start at two."

The doctor bowed in acquiescence, but he took the precaution himself to make the necessary arrangements, though he did not think it wise to mention this to the great lady.

At two precisely, Madam Rogers was assisted into the automobile, and, Doctor Kidder by her side, was soon whirling over the frozen roads toward the Mecca of her decision. It was not a long journey, and the old lady was keenly alive to the interests along the way. When they turned into Westwood Avenue she sat up straight and looked about.

"That's the house," she said, and, sure enough, there was the house of the photograph, and standing at the door ready to assist the invalid, as the automobile drew up at the steps, was a trim little nurse in blue and white, a little nurse with a round child-like face and wide blue eyes.

## V.

Madam Rogers stayed at the sanitarium all winter, and once a month she sent for Robert Kidder to come and see her. On these occasions little Miss Lucy served tea for them.

"She's the nicest little thing," remarked Madam Rogers emphatically on one of these occasions. "I'm going to take her home with me."

"Indeed, and does Miss Brown consent?"

"Miss Brown? Oh—I didn't know who you meant. We always call her little Miss Lucy here."

Doctor Kidder felt distinctly annoyed, though he couldn't have said just why.

"Does she like that?" he asked.

Madam Rogers stared. "I'm sure I don't know," she said. "It's a pretty enough name, isn't it?"

"Well, yes," agreed the doctor, as Miss Lucy entered with the tea things. She served them swiftly and then

crossed the room to put wood on the fire. The doctor set down his teacup and joined her.

"You had better let me do that," he said. "You know building fires is my passion—or one of them. Have you forgotten the blaze I made to celebrate the coming of my first patient?"

Madam Rogers did not catch this last question, but Miss Lucy did.

"Hush!" she whispered, frightened.

"Why?"

"She doesn't know."

"Then I'll tell her."

"No, no—please——"

"Very well, I won't to-day." He laid a new stick on the blaze. "Don't you ever have days off any more?"

"Yes, indeed."

"But you do not come our way?"

An answering laugh flashed in her eyes for a moment. "I can't afford to tumble off trolleys every time," she said softly.

It was an unfortunate remark, and Miss Lucy blushed at it. The doctor smiled.

"It needn't have been so expensive," he said. "You and I are in the same profession. Didn't you know that physicians can't allow nurses to give them gold pieces?"

"Hush! She will hear you."

"Doesn't she ever doze off in her chair?" he asked, but the old lady showed herself awake by sending the nurse after her knitting work, and Doctor Kidder was obliged to return to his teacup.

And he got no nearer returning the gold piece. On the occasions of his visits Madam Rogers' nurse never appeared unless she was rung for, and always withdrew discreetly as soon as her services were not required. If he met her by chance in the hall or snatched a word at the door, a friendly smile in the blue eyes told him the meeting was not unwelcome; but there was little chance for more than a word of greeting or farewell.

But a kinder day dawned.

Madam Rogers returned to her home in the spring, and she carried Lucy Brown with her. Miss Lucy had no

voice in the matter; neither had the physician in charge of the sanitarium. Madam Rogers wanted her, and she went.

The other nurses bade her tearful farewells. "You're a dear, little Miss Lucy," exclaimed the head nurse, "and we'll miss you awfully."

A group of them stood together watching the departure.

"Who do you suppose it is that sends them?" asked one of the girls of no one in particular. "She's such a quiet little mouse, she'd never tell; but there have been violets every week and sometimes books. Do you suppose——"

But no one answered the unfinished question as the big automobile puffed away, bearing Madam Rogers and her little nurse and Madam Rogers' young physician.

## VI.

"Young man, you ought to marry and settle down. All physicians should marry young."

Madam Rogers looked keenly into the face of her medical adviser. He changed color, of course, being human, but he bowed his head meekly.

"I should be most happy to take your advice," he said. "'Barkis is willin'," but what about the lady?"

"Pshaw!" exclaimed the old woman, with a vigorous nod of her cap ribbons. "A handsome young fellow like you doesn't need to waste his time in anxiety as to the sentiments of the lady."

The doctor wheeled about to the open window; the lovely fragrance of a spring morning drifted in from the garden below, and delicately shaded roads stretched away into Arcady. The call of spring was in the air, and the man's blood responded.

"You shouldn't put such dangerous suggestions into the minds of young things on such a morning," he declared; and then, moved by a sudden daring impulse, he met Madam Rogers' keen glance.

"My dear lady," he said, "is Miss Brown too busy to go with me for a drive across the hills?"

Madam Rogers gaped. Then slowly

recognition and approval dawned on her countenance, and all the time her sharp eyes held his in merciless scrutiny, but he bore the test bravely.

"You have my blessing," she announced benignantly at length. "It is entirely suitable. I'm glad I thought of it."

Robert Kidder bowed himself out of the presence, and sought Lucy Brown in the garden.

"You're to have a day off," he told her, "and you're to spend it with me."

It was Miss Lucy's turn to gasp, but she followed him to the buggy, her hands full of the tender flowers she had been gathering.

"Are you sure I ought to go?" she asked.

"Never was surer of anything in my life," he answered, as they sped down the avenue into the spring sunshine. "And she, our beneficent patroness, commands it."

"She is very kind."

"So I think."

Miss Lucy was sorting the flowers in her lap. "Here are a few violets," she said. "Won't you take them in return——"

"In return for what?" he asked as he put the fragrant blossoms in his button-hole.

Her eyes fell. "In return for other violets," she said.

"Oh, those? They were paid for long ago." A mischievous smile twinkled in his eyes. "I've been returning your gold piece on the installment plan."

"Oh, was that all?" The words escaped Miss Lucy's lips before she thought, and they had a disquieting effect upon the doctor.

"All—good Lord!" he exclaimed, grown suddenly serious. "For five months I've seen you alone on an average of one minute a month—five minutes in all! I did not know such discreet nurses existed. I had to express myself in some way or—or explode, and books and violets seemed the only available means. Why were you so discreet, Miss Lucy Brown?"

He stooped for a better look into the blue eyes, but they were drooping.



*"Hush!" she whispered, frightened.*

"I did not want to presume on a chance acquaintance. I was Madam Rogers' nurse, that was all," said Miss Lucy demurely.

"And now?"

"And now, you have been so good as to take me to drive. I'm having a day off, and please we won't talk shop."

"No, we won't talk shop, if shop means old Lady Rogers. At last, at last, the time has come to talk of many things! What shall we talk about, Miss Lucy?"

"Oh, of the spring morning," cried the girl quickly. "And of the birds and sunshine and all the lovely things I haven't had a chance to enjoy for so long. Will you take me where I can see marsh marigolds in bloom, and gather bluets and small white violets, and pretend I'm a little girl again?"

"I will take you wherever you like," agreed the doctor warmly, "if only the fancy does not seize you to want to go back again."

"And after we have found the marigolds," went on Miss Lucy, "perhaps

we'll talk of the last delightful book you sent—at least, I suppose you sent it. That gold piece must have lasted a long time!" she added slyly.

The discreet little nurse had disappeared, and again he saw the bright face of his first patient—the girl away on a holiday.

"Miss Lucy Brown"—the doctor passed a caressing hand over the garden violets in his buttonhole—"I think a day off agrees with you."

"Then you don't approve of me as a nurse?"

"I think you are an adorable little nurse, but too distant in that capacity. I prefer you in the rôle of companion."

"We weren't to talk shop."

"Is that shop? Well, before we talk anything, we are going to play the game of twenty questions."

"Hurry, then," said Miss Lucy, "for I want to get the marigolds."

But the doctor drew the little mare down to a walk. They were passing through a bit of woodland, and it was too pretty to hurry.



"My first question relates to another day off of yours, the first one I happened to know of. Why did you run away on that weak ankle without awaiting your physician's permission?"

"Because duty called, and my physician was not there, and—and I didn't want to wait and be tempted to play invalid longer."

"Then you admit there was a chance for temptation?"

"Days off come only once a month, and I enjoyed mine."

"In spite of being a 'case'?"

"Because of being a case, perhaps."

"Thank you."

"Besides——"

"Besides what?"

Miss Lucy flushed and dimpled. "I'm afraid it isn't polite, but nurses are often critical. I was just going to say that I think he—that physician—was mistaken as to the seriousness of my injury. At least, it got well so surprisingly fast."

"Then you don't give the poor fellow credit for skillful treatment?" There was a shade of reproach in his tone.

She lifted the blue eyes quickly.

"Oh, you know I'm not so ungrateful," she cried.

"Then what did you mean?"

The eyes fell again.

"I'm afraid I can't just say," faltered the girl, with burning cheeks.

He loved her confusion and was merciless.

"Why did you run away and never leave a trace of your destination? A man must naturally infer that you didn't want to see him again."

"Oh, Doctor Kidder! How should I know you wanted to see me again?"

"Did you really doubt it?"

No answer.

"Miss Lucy Brown, you are not giving truthful answers. It's a rule of the game to answer honestly."

"That wasn't my reason, at all," declared Miss Lucy.

"What was it then? No, I will tell you. You were afraid I would return that gold piece. You knew it was not professional courtesy on my part to keep

it; and you would not be beholden to me, a stranger. Why wouldn't you let me take care of you as I wanted to?"

He spoke so gravely that the girl beside him was distressed.

"You earned it," she pleaded. "You were very kind; it was so little, but it was all I had. You told me you had been waiting so long for a patient, and I thought—perhaps—you needed it." The last words fell in a strained whisper, and the cheeks were burning.

"You darling!" That was what the doctor wanted to say, but he refrained, remembering that he had no right to use such expressions until he had asked still another question, and he meant to delay that just a little. Instead he dropped his hand over hers for a brief moment—which was perhaps quite as reprehensible.

"Forgive my teasing," he pleaded. "I wanted to hear you own up. I was sure of your sweet intention. I wasn't quite so hard up as that, however, and I meant to return the gold piece when I found you as I knew I should. But do you know, I've changed my mind."

He took the gold piece from his pocket and showed it to her. "I carry it always," he said. "It has brought me no end of good fortune and I hope it may bring me far more. It is a lucky piece, I'm sure."

"Oh, there are the marigolds!" cried Miss Lucy. They were emerging from the woods; a bit of marsh lay ahead, and the gold piece was suddenly forgotten. "Do you think we can reach a few without getting wet?" she asked eagerly.

They did, and then went on in search of violets, and a little farther still in search of something else, and by noon they were glad to hail a passing bakery cart and satisfy their hunger on currant buns and sugar-powdered doughnuts, while a convenient well with a picturesque sweep and a mossy bucket served to quench their thirst.

"Oh, I always did love picnics!" laughed Miss Lucy.

She had made a wreath of young maple leaves which the doctor had set among the dark waves of her hair, and



her lap was full of flowers. They went on and on through the joyous spring-time world, and the sorrel mare puzzled much over this new leisurely method of progress, its innumerable halts and unreasonable loiterings; but the little mare was quick at learning new lessons.

The sun was going down when she found herself headed toward home again, and still her master was in no hurry.

"Have you had a nice day off?" he was asking, and Miss Lucy whispered: "Beautiful!"

She was tired, perhaps, for her cheek had dropped against the doctor's coat sleeve.

Suddenly she sat up. "It's perfectly shocking," she declared. "We've been gone all day, and probably lots of people have wanted you."

"I hope so," he said. "They kept me

waiting a long time; now it's my turn. Besides, my First Patient needed me, didn't she?"

"What will Madam Rogers say?"

Doctor Kidder laughed softly.

"Dear child, Madam Rogers considers it all her doings. She ordered me to marry at once; that is why I am considering it, of course! You will find that she has already arranged for the wedding and decided upon what she is going to give us."

"Oh, dear!"

He stooped to kiss the sigh from her lips.

"Don't you mind, darling. Whoa, Pony, that wasn't for you! I'll explain that her little Miss Lucy has decided to take a new position. But we'll be good to the old lady. The first time I give you a 'day off' you can go and spend it with *her*—if you want to!"



### The Turn of the Road

WHEN we were children, you and I,  
 In the buttercup fields at play,  
 Beyond my sight up the moss-grown path  
 At times you would run away.  
 "Come on!" I would hear your laughing voice,  
 From the depths of fragrant fern,  
 "I am only a little way ahead,  
 The other side of the turn!"

One day, you went away, dear heart,  
 To the fields of fadeless flowers;  
 Yet I sometimes hear from the sunny heights  
 Your voice through the darkened hours;  
 "I'm only a little way ahead."  
 So my heart takes up its load,  
 For again, as of old, I'll find you, dear,  
 Beyond the turn of the road!

ALICE E. ALLEN.

## POLITENESS AS AN ASSET

By Charles Battell Loomis

A HYPOTHETICAL person just asked me, "Does it pay to be polite?"

Does it pay to be polite?

Why, my hypothetical friend, it would take many hundred freight-cars to hold the gold that was made in the United States last year alone because clerks and salesmen were polite.

Let us leave politeness at home and among friends and acquaintances out of the question, and consider it commercially.

A friend of mine whom I will call Duncan went into a jewelry store. He really had no business in a jewelry store because he was temporarily down and out. He had just lost his position, his wife was ill, his son broke his leg the next day, and it was no time for him to be going to a jewelry store.

The reason he went there was to find the address of a man who had formerly been a clerk in that store.

The proprietor happened to be near the door when Duncan went in, and he asked him what he could do for him. I dare say that the proprietor may have had a notion that Duncan was about to buy something because he had not been out of a job long enough to look seedy; but if he had any such idea it fled when Duncan asked him if he could tell him where he could find this former clerk.

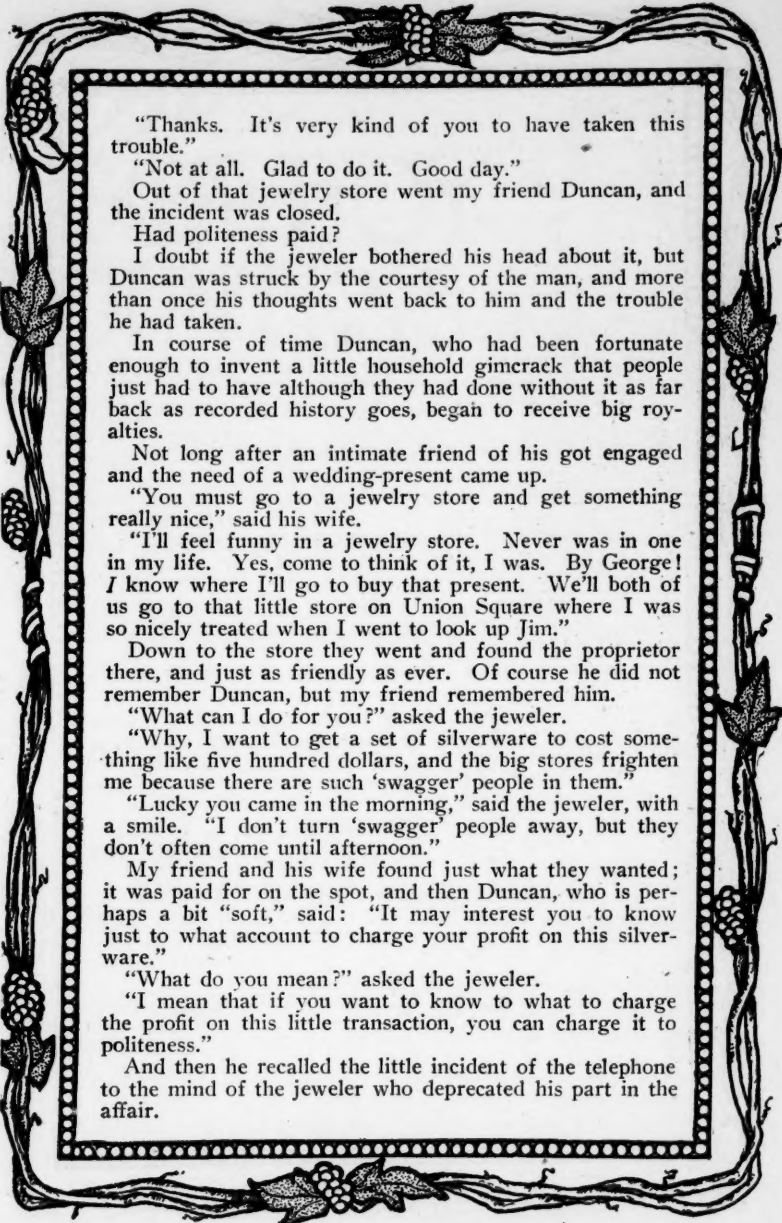
I have known proprietors of stores who would have said: "Really, I can't be bothered to find out such things as addresses of fired clerks. This is a jewelry store." But this particular jeweler was not a man of that calibre. He said: "I don't know myself, but my brother does. He's at the works. Is it important?"

"Yes, to me, but I don't want to trouble you."

"No trouble at all. I can get my brother in a moment on the phone."

He got him, asked him for the address, received it, and came back to Duncan.

"My brother says that he is with So & So, Times Building."



"Thanks. It's very kind of you to have taken this trouble."

"Not at all. Glad to do it. Good day."

Out of that jewelry store went my friend Duncan, and the incident was closed.

Had politeness paid?

I doubt if the jeweler bothered his head about it, but Duncan was struck by the courtesy of the man, and more than once his thoughts went back to him and the trouble he had taken.

In course of time Duncan, who had been fortunate enough to invent a little household gimcrack that people just had to have although they had done without it as far back as recorded history goes, began to receive big royalties.

Not long after an intimate friend of his got engaged and the need of a wedding-present came up.

"You must go to a jewelry store and get something really nice," said his wife.

"I'll feel funny in a jewelry store. Never was in one in my life. Yes, come to think of it, I was. By George! I know where I'll go to buy that present. We'll both of us go to that little store on Union Square where I was so nicely treated when I went to look up Jim."

Down to the store they went and found the proprietor there, and just as friendly as ever. Of course he did not remember Duncan, but my friend remembered him.

"What can I do for you?" asked the jeweler.

"Why, I want to get a set of silverware to cost something like five hundred dollars, and the big stores frighten me because there are such 'swagger' people in them."

"Lucky you came in the morning," said the jeweler, with a smile. "I don't turn 'swagger' people away, but they don't often come until afternoon."

My friend and his wife found just what they wanted; it was paid for on the spot, and then Duncan, who is perhaps a bit "soft," said: "It may interest you to know just to what account to charge your profit on this silverware."

"What do you mean?" asked the jeweler.

"I mean that if you want to know to what to charge the profit on this little transaction, you can charge it to politeness."

And then he recalled the little incident of the telephone to the mind of the jeweler who deprecated his part in the affair.

That *was* a large crop of fruit from one seed.  
There were two trains standing in the subway. One was headed up, the other downtown.

Jack Gardner—to name him at once—looked out of the window of the uptown train and saw a somewhat pompous-looking man of the banker type looking at him.

Jack did not like the man's looks, and out of freakishness, just as the car pulled out, he, catching the banker's eye, made a hideous face at him.

The banker glared, but the cars passed their respective ways.

Here was another seemingly closed incident, but it had a comic sequel.

Jack was interested in a little real-estate scheme, and he was desirous of getting a backer. He obtained a letter to a capitalist whose headquarters were in the Belmont Hotel, and went to see him by appointment. There was every reason to suppose that the capitalist would look with favor on the project.

What was Jack's horror, when the capitalist came into the room, to recognize in him the banker at whom he had made a face in the subway.

Jack could only hope he was not recognized, and with not a little nervousness he explained his idea and the banker listened attentively.

After Jack was through the banker rose to his feet.

Jack also rose.

Then the banker projected his head forward and made a face fully as hideous as that which Jack had made in the subway.

After which he left the room with a dignity of demeanor that was awe-inspiring.

Here, you will see, no politeness was lost on either side, but it is not likely that Jack will make any more faces in the subway.

In cultivating politeness be sure that it is allowed to grow from within. Don't use the external kind. Politeness as a veneer looks well, but it doesn't wear well; it is the politeness that is an integral part of your make-up that best stands the wear and tear of life.

Good-by. I've had *such* a pleasant time—giving advice.

# The COWBOY COUNTESS

*Her Adventures While Maid  
of Honor to the Queen*

TOLD IN LETTERS TO  
HER LATE GOVERNESS



II.

Edited by C. N. and A. M. Williamson

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

BUCKINGHAM PALACE,  
MONDAY.

PERFECT DEAR: Here lies your letter before me, in its exquisite French. I envy that girl you are teaching; and if you hadn't brought me up to be a young saint with all the virtues—except two or three trifling ones that don't count—I should want to give a good tweak to those long curls which you describe, and say: "Take that, you minx, for stealing some of my mademoiselle's love!" But do save at least half for me, or I shall wail so loudly you'll hear me across the Atlantic, and exclaim: "*Peste!* What strange sirens these new automobiles have!"

You say you want to hear all about my life, and the lives of those who surround me. Also, you hope I haven't been tumbling into any more scrapes. Would I be *I*, if I hadn't?

I don't know whether you'll call what I'm going to tell you, a "scrape"—if you'd use such a word!—but I do believe it's turned at least one of my copper hairs to silver. Not that it shows white, but I seem to *feel* it. And I advise you, here and now, not to read this letter late at night, after you've gone to bed, especially if you sleep in a lonely part of the house, for it is calculated to give you the *creeps*. If Lady Maud Wentworth was mixed up in my first English adventure, she's more mixed up in this, though in a different way; and before I begin to tell "what happened next," as the children say, I'd better describe Maud.

I did mention, I think, that she's a timid, gentle, retiring girl, yet I don't remember saying how pretty she is. I *can't* help knowing that people call me rather good to look at, now can I?



But Maud's as different as possible from me, consequently we excite some attention when we're seen together. She's even slimmer than I am; and instead of my five foot seven or eight, she has only about five foot three of height—which makes me feel very protecting. She's as dark as I am fair; but it's a lovely kind of dusky, mysterious darkness, with big violet eyes gleaming like blue stars out of its twilight, which loses nothing, I can assure you, from contrast with my white and pink. My red mop gives her thick cloud of dark hair all the more value—and vice versa, perhaps. She has no color in her little oval face, except her pretty mouth, which is small and full and rosy, like a petted child's, when it's unwillingly preparing to be kissed by a "grown up."

There you have Lady Maud, as well as I can describe her. And she has a soft, appealing manner, which is nevertheless dignified; but she's the simplest creature you ever saw in all her ways and tastes; and no one who didn't know would suppose her to be the daughter of a marquiss who may some day be a duke. She has several older sisters, though, who are said to have a very good opinion of themselves—so perhaps that accounts for it.

I just hinted to you in my last letter that Maud loved some one, and didn't want him to see those silly old letters of hers, which I managed to get back from the horrid man. I didn't tell you anything about the "some one" himself, and indeed I didn't know, at that time; but since then Maud has taken to calling me her "guardian angel," and has confided everything to me. My dear, it is the *greatest romance!*

She said no more about the "some one," when I gave her the letters I'd "retrieved"; but a week after that episode, when I was beginning to get over the shock and feel like myself, I was told that a guest was expected at Windsor, a Roumanian prince, semiroyal, and a favorite of the king and queen. Maud talked very little about him, but when the day came for Prince Milo of Krah to arrive, I couldn't help seeing

that she was excited—absent-minded—with a dash of rose-color on her cheeks.

"Can it be because of this Prince Milo?" I wondered.

I didn't ask her, or anybody else, questions. You brought me up better than that, if I am a "cowboy countess." But the mistress of the queen's bed-chamber, a *grande dame*, who's taken rather a fancy to me for some reason or other, began gossiping about the prince who—she said—was "among the most interesting, if not tragic, figures in Europe."

"Of course you know about Lady Maud and Prince Milo, don't you?" she added. I answered that I didn't; so being a great lady and not a mere gossip, she "shut up"—if so magnificent a person could do anything so commonplace.

That afternoon he came, in time for tea with their majesties. Maud was not sent for, as it was my "wait." Such a handsome, yet sad-looking prince! I suppose no eyes can express sadness, or indeed, any deep feeling, as Eastern eyes can. His are glorious. Just to have them gaze at you for a few seconds makes you feel as if you were listening to wild, tragic music played on a violin by Kubelik. You *know* that feeling, don't you? I almost think I should have fallen in love with Prince Milo, if I hadn't heard there was something between him and Maud. He is about six foot two, slender, and graceful in every movement; not a boy by any means; perhaps thirty-three or four.

Maud and I share a sitting-room between us. Her bedroom and mine both open into it. As her father is traveling round the world, and she has no mother, she doesn't go away very often, even when it is not her wait. As for me, you know I have no home; so we are both of us "on hand" at the same time generally, which is one of the reasons why we are such chums. When I came back, there she was in our sitting-room, reading a book in Italian, which I am teaching her. She tried to talk about indifferent things at first, but she couldn't stand it long.





*I almost think I should have fallen in love with Prince Milo, if I hadn't heard there was something between him and Maud.*

"Peggy, I *must* know how he is looking!" she exclaimed.

So then the murder was out, and she might as well go on—which she did, when I had mentioned that "he looked rather like a bronze figure of a sad angel, in a fashionable frock coat, and a particularly nice collar."

"The king and queen wouldn't have asked him during one of my waits," she sighed, "because it's very unwise in me to think of him, or in him to think of me, and naturally they can't encourage it, though they are so kind, and so very sorry for us both."

"Is it that he is too royal to be allowed to marry the daughter of a marquis?" I asked.

"Oh no, it isn't that," said Maud. "Our family has royal blood, some generations back, and if things were different, we might have married. It's all so tragic. Fancy his knowing I am here, yet not being able to have one word with me alone, though we love each other so desperately! Yet it's bet-

ter, of course. I don't know what would become of us if we were much together. Perhaps I should be tempted to run away with him. He *has* asked me to, Peggy; he's offered to give up everything, and take me to the other end of the world with him, where no one need ever recognize us. But I had strength to resist him. I wouldn't ruin his life."

"If you don't mind telling me, what is the obstacle?" I asked. For she had the air of thinking I knew all about it.

"You haven't heard Prince Milo's history?" Maud cried. "I thought every one had."

Then I reminded her what a short time I'd been "countessing," and she told me the story.

It seems, Prince Milo was married when he was twenty-one to a young Servian princess, even "royaler" than he, though not so rich. It was a marriage made by relatives, and they were never in love. Princess Nadine was

very fascinating, and madly extravagant. Her great passion was for jewels. She had some splendid wedding presents, and inherited a few fine things, but her greatest treasures came to her from Prince Milo and his family. They had heirlooms which had been famous for centuries, and it was said that even the Queen of Roumania and the crown princess had nothing so beautiful.

Yet even those possessions didn't satisfy Princess Nadine, now Princess Milo of Krah. She spent a fortune—her husband's!—in buying new jewels, and went on spending more, until there was a family council, and she was compelled to be more careful. That wasn't till after she had got rid of half Prince Milo's money, though. She had a fearful temper, and used to fly into tantrums if she were opposed, and was so undisciplined and childish that no one could respect her, her husband least of all, since she showed him the worst side of her nature.

But there was one man who pretended to think her perfect. This was a young Frenchman, the Duc de Dieugarde, a man of fashion, much adored by women. He'd always prided himself on his flirtations as well as on his successful duels, and he was also a great gambler—lost thousands at Monte Carlo nearly every season, and shrugged his shoulders. When he got to know Princess Milo in Paris one year, however, he paid her the biggest compliment such a man can pay to a woman. From the day of their meeting, he gave up all his flirtations, seeming to have eyes and thoughts only for her. Whenever she went, he was to be seen, silently, reverently worshiping. And from that type of man, you can imagine the flattery. The princess was caught in the web of it, and hardly fluttered her wings.

As for Prince Milo, he wasn't in love with life in Paris, but he wouldn't leave his wife, lest she should behave more foolishly without, than with him. And she had made herself so unpopular in Roumania, it had been "arranged" by that family council I told

you of that she should live in Paris for the present. They'd taken a house there, and the princess was consulting some celebrated specialist for "nerves." There were people, by this time, who whispered that she was mad; and it turned out that there had been two hidden cases of madness among her ancestors, not far back.

Well, one night in the height of the season, there was going to be a grand *bal masqué*. An elderly cousin of the Duc de Dieugarde's was giving it, a Marquise de Norville, who was very fond of him; and the gossip was, afterward, that she was in the secret of what was going to happen; that she gave the ball so that her cousin might have his chance.

Anyhow, she was very rich, and he was on the verge of ruin. All his money was spent, and he was up to his eyes in debt. Besides, Paris was getting "too hot" for the duc, on account of his last duel, which had set the best people against him, and he had been practically cut by two or three important personages. It was beginning to be a matter for gossip that the Duc de Dieugarde couldn't "hang on" much longer, but would have to disappear; also that, if he should want to marry a rich wife, it would be difficult to find any father who would give him a daughter.

Prince Milo didn't want his wife to go to this ball of the Marquise de Norville's, but Nadine had hysterics at the suggestion of giving it up; and as her doctor advised humoring her when possible, the prince consented. She decided to appear as "Night"; and in order to have a costume which would make Europe open its eyes, and outdo American millionairesses, she ordered most of her wonderful jewels to be taken from their settings and sprinkled over her dress. It was of some soft, transparent black material, and the jewels—pearls, diamonds, sapphires, rubies, emeralds—were scattered over it like a glittering crust of blazing, many-colored stars in a frosty night. They were fastened securely on by a wonderful arrangement invented es-

pecially to please her, by Worth; a network of silver and gold wire, so delicate as to be almost invisible, while adding to the shimmering effect, yet strong enough to hold the amazing collection securely. Besides all this, she wore a stomacher of brilliants, a bertha of pearls, a crown of diamonds with a kind of veil made of smaller diamonds, hanging down over her shoulders, a dog-collar of brilliants, and goodness knows how many ropes of pearls, to say nothing of rings and bracelets, and such trifles as those! Altogether, as she stood, she was worth about five hundred thousand pounds—half a million.

Two policemen in plain clothes were to watch her carriage, and see that none of her jewels were picked off her frock like raspberries, at the ball, where, of course, she was the great sensation of the evening. During the after-supper dance she went into a conservatory with the Duc de Dieugarde, and having bribed the guardian policemen—as it was found out afterward—she contrived to disappear, no one ever quite knew how.

You would think, wouldn't you, that such a disappearance would make the wildest outcry? And so it did, of course, in society; but everybody said, "I told you so!" because, you see, the Duc de Dieugarde disappeared at the same time.

They left Paris that night—at least, he was seen at the Gare du Nord with a heavily veiled, quietly dressed lady, and a lot of luggage. This was learned next day; and naturally not much doubt was felt as to who was the veiled lady. Then, another thing, not so generally known—though a good many people did manage to know it—was that Nadine wrote to her husband a letter in pencil, posted not an hour after vanishing from the ball. She told him that she was now with the only man she had ever loved, and that she was happy for the first time in her life. Not a word did she say about the jewels, but she put a postscript, inviting Milo to divorce her, so that she might marry the Duc de Dieugarde.

Unfortunately for her—and for

Prince Milo himself—he is a devout Catholic, and doesn't consider that divorce has the slightest effect, in dissolving a marriage. So you see, there he was, and is, bound to a half-mad woman who deserted him to run away with another man, carrying with her half his fortune.

Most men would have had the couple followed by the police, and all the heirlooms taken from the princess, if nothing more. But Prince Milo was too proud. Being the last of his line, the heirlooms mattered comparatively little. Nadine had married him to get them and his fortune. She got both. Let her keep them, he thought.

They went directly to London, the duc and the veiled lady, and afterward the pair were heard of in other countries. Sometimes a magnificent jewel came into the market, and it was whispered about that the Princess Milo had sold another diamond or a pearl; but if the prince knew, he betrayed no interest. So things went on for a while; and then, on a visit to England, he met Lady Maud Wentworth.

Now you will understand where the tragic part comes in. They fell in love at first sight—which Maud says is the only true way to fall in love. But the prince had no right to love and marry. He had all the disadvantages, and none of the advantages, of a married man. His principles forbade his divorcing Nadine to take another wife, even if Maud's father—also a Catholic—would let his daughter marry a divorced person.

By this time, three years had passed since Nadine ran away, and though, as I said, at first rumors came occasionally of the Duc de Dieugarde being seen with a woman, no news had been received for a long, long while. It occurred to Prince Milo that Nadine might be dead, in which case he would be free; but although he spent several thousands of pounds in employing famous detectives all over the world, they could learn nothing of the Duc de Dieugarde and his companion.

This story Maud told me, with tears brimming in her eyes as she went on

to the end. For that *was* the end. She and Milo had loved each other for two years, she said, and they would love each other for as many more years as they both might live; but no happiness could ever come of their love. They were destined to be parted always. Nadine might be alive, or might be dead. They would never know. They had given up all hope now.

Maud had promised her father not to correspond with Milo; but twice a year he came to England for a few weeks, and it was good to know that he was in the same country. They met, but seldom alone; and he never made love, except with his eyes. That he could not help! But he might as well be a monk, and she a nun, for all the earthly satisfaction they could have from their love.

"I don't talk of it to people," she said, "but every one knows Milo's story; and how we love each other in vain. They call it a tragic romance, and so it is; yet to us at times there seems more of tragedy than romance. It's so sad, so hopeless. And one can be young but once!"

Then she broke down and cried. I took her in my arms, and tried to comfort her, saying that things might come right some day. But in my heart I didn't see how they could, when the best detectives of Europe had been defeated. Prince Milo stopped at Windsor for two days, and saw Maud only once. I had several talks with him; and if he's fascinating as a mere ac-

quaintance, what can he be as a lover? I did pity Maud because she must give him up; and I would have done anything to help her—if there'd been anything to do. But, of course, there wasn't. It seemed a case where nobody could help. Even after Prince Milo went back to far-away Roumania, which he did very soon, I thought heaps about him.

Before long, we all—that means the court—came up to town, and Maud to outward seeming was her own quiet, shy, dignified little self again. But I knew!

Now, would you or any one dream that my going for a shopping expedition with her majesty could possibly have any effect on the love-affairs of a Roumanian prince? But wait till I tell you about that shopping expedition. And as I said before, I hope you aren't reading this letter in your bed, in the middle of the night.

We were to visit Warren's Stores, a huge, magnificent block of shops where you can buy

everything necessary or desirable for all classes, and all periods of life from the cradle to the grave. One specialty is a permanent exhibition of ideal houses, which they guarantee to copy, according to the one you select as a model, for fifty pounds or fifty thousand. The day we paid our visit, a new ideal house had been added, furnished and decorated entirely in Venetian style of the sixteenth century. The queen was to see it before the public were admitted, and there was a sub-



*He was also a great gambler—lost thousands at Monte Carlo nearly every season, and shrugged his shoulders.*

duced sensation in the place, though the royal party wasn't supposed to be recognized.

Having inspected the Venetian house, and ordered two or three beautiful antiques which took her fancy, the queen was ready to leave Warren's, having several other engagements; but Princess Max of Gothenberg-Schwanstein—visiting at the palace—was so fascinated with the Stores, which she'd never seen before, that she wanted to make a tour of inspection.

At last it was arranged that the queen should go on, with a very important lady who was of the party, to a hospital where she intended to visit a sick child. I was told to accompany Princess Max, a jolly, middle-aged lady of the very nicest German type, and to return with her to the palace.

One of the managers of Warren's, delighted that the princess should wish to see the place, showed us about; and when we had "done" all the ideal houses, the antique and the jewelry departments, suggested that her serene highness might be interested in the cold storage. It was "magnificently installed," he said, and was considered quite a wonderful sight.

"On a hot day like the present," he added, "her serene highness would find the temperature as delightful as the high Alps"; and besides, at the moment there was another attraction, which might prove amusing. A sale of stored articles, unclaimed for five years, was about to take place, and it would surprise her serene highness to see how many boxes and trunks had remained in the cold storage for that length of time, without payment or claimants. Clients of Warren's were warned, on the printed receipts given to them in exchange for their goods—he explained—that, if their property were not claimed at the end of two years, the management reserved the right to sell. As a matter of fact, however, the cold storage department had been opened with great *éclat* over five years ago, yet nothing had ever been sold.

Now, the place was overcrowded, and months ago notices had been sent out

to all whom it might concern that there would be a sale on the twenty-ninth of July. A certain number of persons had responded, either by making the payments long fallen into arrears, or by settling up accounts and removing their property. Still, something like thirty boxes and parcels remained, and as it was now the twenty-ninth of July, the sale would begin at the hour appointed—four o'clock.

Princess Max was quite excited. She questioned the manager, and learned that the packages or trunks would be sold without being opened. Those who desired to buy would bid such sums as they cared to offer, and might be rewarded by acquiring fine bargains. This idea seemed deliciously mysterious to her, and so it did to me, though of course it wasn't my place to give an opinion unless I were asked.

I remembered how heavenly I used to think it, to drive with you eighteen miles to poor little Saundersville, and buy "prize packets" of candy at Smith's, in Main Street. I used to tremble with excitement in opening them, though in my heart I was sure I should never fish out anything better than a china doll or a necklace of blue glass beads. There was always the wild thrill of knowing there might be a diamond ring or a hundred-dollar bill.

The princess said that she would love to watch the sale, and, if the manager could promise to preserve her incognito, she might even bid, in case she saw anything irresistibly attractive. I ventured to suggest that she should go to the lace department to buy a veil, which she did, and I followed her example—for people don't seem to have forgotten those enlarged snap shots of me which adorned every paper and magazine when I first came to England.

We had just time to shroud our too-well-known features in clouds of dotted net before the hour for the sale to begin. The manager escorted us downstairs at ten minutes to four, and quickly made a way for us to pass through the little crowd already gathered outside the shut doors of the cold storage.





*There was no time to reflect, and I couldn't give up the trunk.*

On account of this sale, which had been advertised in the papers, the department had been closed to the public from three o'clock until four, when it was to be thrown open.

Among the people attracted by the advertisements, there were very few men. Those there were looked Jewish. I fancied that they were sellers of second-hand clothing, ready to speculate a little, in the hope of a bargain. But

to the half-dozen men, there were fifty women, perhaps, mostly of the lower middle class—creatures with no imagination, said the princess. According to her, we were the only ones captivated by the mystery of the sale.

The heavy steel doors were opened by a tall man in uniform, to whom the manager had whispered something impressive. Between them, they floated us in, on the crest of the human wave.



We passed the whole length of the huge department, where the air was cold as an ice cave—a temperature which had never changed once in five years, said our guide—and where the marble-paved corridors were lined on either side by iron grilles. We, and everybody, went on to the end, where, in a large open space, all marble and electric light, the sale was to be held.

On the floor stood eight or ten trunks and stout boxes; while displayed on a kind of improvised counter were about twenty parcels of different shapes and sizes. Each box and package was numbered conspicuously: "Lot 1"; "Lot 2"; and so on. There was a kind of auctioneer person, and two other men to move or lift the things.

My heart began to beat, and I was so excited I nearly grabbed the princess by the arm, but luckily I didn't. Till that minute, I'd not had the vaguest intention of doing any bidding on my own account; but my eyes lit upon a trunk which I felt I *must* have, or be disconsolate ever after. I was dreadfully afraid the princess would want it, in which case I should have had to trample my hopes underfoot. I was enchanted when she pointed out a much smaller box, without which, she informed me in a German stage whisper, the world would cease to be a place worth living in for her. It seemed a miracle that she, and every one else present, shouldn't be clamoring for my love; it was so large, so fascinating, so altogether desirable—but perhaps people argued, if such a big trunk *really* contained anything valuable, it would have been paid for and claimed long ago.

The princess' coveted treasure was only what you Parisiennes call *un grand carton*, done up in stout brown paper, and sealed. It was the number and color of the seals which appealed to the serene lady, she admitted; but the fact that there was no key to my darling seemed far more mysterious and exciting to me.

Princess Max of Gothenberg-Schwanstein was fortunate. The parcel she yearned for was Lot 7—lucky number,

said she—and after a few minutes' bidding she secured it without much difficulty for five pounds ten. Mine was Lot 29, which the princess called a very unlucky number; and it took so long to get to it that she grew tired and said she was afraid she would have to "tear me away." Her feet ached, and besides, she was dying to know what was in her parcel.

There seemed no help for it; I would have to go. But I felt as if I just couldn't *bear* it. When one is a maid of honor, and is on duty "doing the polite" in her royal mistress' absence, to a distinguished guest of the queen, one has to obey the D. G.'s wants without a sigh; yet the more impossible it appeared to get that trunk, the more wild I was to have it. I felt capable of anything to obtain it for mine.

"Come, my dear," said the princess. "I really must go. You shall see my parcel opened. We will have it taken out to the carriage now."

She began to move. I was forced to follow. The manager was with us; and in desperation I took him into my confidence. Hurriedly, in a low voice, I explained to him that I'd wanted to bid for Lot 29, and asked if he could secure it for me. He said that he could instruct a person to bid; but how high would I be prepared to go? There was no time to reflect, and I couldn't give up the trunk. So I answered hastily: "It doesn't matter *how* high, as long as I *get* it."

Then I told him who I was—I might have saved myself the trouble, for he knew already—asked him to have the trunk sent, *immediately* it had become my property, to me at the palace. Whatever the price was, I would pay on its arrival.

That settled, I breathed again, and followed in Princess Max's wake to the carriage, which was waiting. She would have her great parcel in with us, and couldn't wait till we got home, to peep in. I didn't blame her! But after all, breaking the seals was the best of the fun. The hidden treasure consisted of an old-fashioned sealskin coat, which she said she would give to one of

her maids. She was sorry, then, that she hadn't waited for me to bid for my pet, so I told her what I'd done, and she made me promise that if the trunk arrived she should be in the room when it was opened.

I was so afraid that something had gone wrong, and it wouldn't come! But it did, about six o'clock. Can you imagine my feelings, when I found I had to pay fifty guineas? You know, I'm not rich enough to be extravagant, even with what dad left me, and my salary as maid of honor, and I was ashamed of my fantastic whim.

Princess Max had invited herself to our sitting-room—Maud's and mine—and she burst out laughing when she heard of my trouble. In a few days I would have money, but just then, I could only scrape together twenty-nine pounds, a sum to match the number of my "lot." And when we came to think of it, the date was the twenty-ninth.

Princess Max said that she began to feel quite superstitious about the trunk. She and Maud both offered to lend me money, but I hated borrowing, even for a few days; so the good-natured princess came to the rescue by proposing to buy my bangle of old Mexican coins. Do you remember it? She had been admiring it all day. I accepted at once, took off the bangle, and handed it to her.

"Why, there are twenty-nine coins!" she exclaimed.

By this time, you can guess we were all eager to see what was in the huge box, and the princess offered to bet that, whatever the contents, there would be twenty-nine of them!

A servant was asked to send for some one in the palace who could open a trunk. In a few minutes a man came, worked at the lock a little, and lifted the lid, which was rounded in shape.

Inside was a hand-painted, satin-cased eider-down quilt, of pale blue. Princess Max pulled it out, to find underneath the most wonderful cloak you ever dreamed of; a mantle for opera or ball, of black chiffon, crusted with diamanté embroidery representing crescent moons and stars, big and small.

"How curious!" exclaimed the princess. "This looks familiar to me, as if I'd seen something like it before. I seem to associate it with—oh, I can't think what! But, in any case, my child, you are likely to get your money's worth!"

"This trunk came from Paris," said Maud suddenly, bending down over the lid. "Here's a label on it. It's dated five years ago, the twenty-ninth of—"

Before she could finish, Princess Max gave a shriek. She had pulled the gorgeous cloak out of the box, where it had apparently been tucked in with no regard to its fragile beauty, and in lifting it—oh, dearest mademoiselle, it makes me cold all over, even now, to think of what we saw underneath.

The body of a young woman was lying there, on her side, with her knees doubled up. She looked as unreal as a wax figure, with her dead white skin, her glassy eyes half open, her pallid arms and hands, her thick lusterless hair, which had been elaborately arranged, but was now disheveled, as if hairpins or ornaments had been pulled out violently, in haste. She wore no jewelry whatever, except a wedding-ring on the left hand; and the poor body was dressed in the most extraordinary way. The black, low-necked, sleeveless garment it had on, looked like the rich satin lining of a ball dress; and torn shreds of gauze had been left on it here and there.

"*Nadine!*" cried Princess Max. Then she turned to us, wax-white, like the dead woman in the trunk. "Don't you understand?" she faltered in German, forgetting her English. "It's Milo of Krah's wife—who disappeared—five years ago, with Dieugarde. I—I was at the *bal masqué*. She came in that cloak. I saw her. Great heavens, the man must have murdered her that night!"

I think, if Maud hadn't fainted, the princess would, and perhaps I would, too. But Maud toppling over like a melting snow-wreath gave us both something to think of. I rang the bell, the princess explained, and incredibly



*"Don't you understand?" she faltered. "It's Milo of Krah's wife who disappeared five years ago."*

soon the police appeared, and took the trunk away.

By and by came along a very apologetic, polite detective, more courteous than any normal sort of duke, and he bowed, and we bowed, and questions were asked and answered. That very

night a telegram was sent to Prince Milo, in Roumania; and a woman who'd been maid to Nadine just before the elopement was wired for, to Paris. She came on, and identified the strange, torn black satin garment as the lining of her mistress' famous jeweled

ball gown. Also she swore that the hair was dressed exactly as she had dressed it on that last night, except that it had been disarranged in taking off the diamond crown.

The theory of the police now is, that the Duc de Dieugarde drugged the unfortunate woman who trusted him, giving her enough laudanum not only to put her to sleep, but to make her sleep forever. Then he and some one else—probably the “veiled woman” seen with him at the Gare du Nord that night, and afterward—tore the jeweled gauze from its lining, stripped poor dead or dying Nadine of all her glories, and bundled her into the great trunk, with her own cloak, and an eider-down quilt to keep the body in place.

The ball had been given on a cold winter night—the twenty-ninth of January—and whether the wicked couple planned it beforehand or not, they must have taken the trunk to Warren's Stores immediately after reaching London. The splendid cold storage department had only just been opened,

and there had been things about it in all the papers, even French ones, as at that time it was the finest in the world. There, in that never-varying, icy temperature, the body had been preserved, as if embedded in a glacier, for five years—to be brought to light by me!

The police think that the duc has very likely been murdered in his turn by the “veiled woman,” otherwise he would have been found long ago in some country or other by the detectives sent to look for him. Now they are searching for her. They have suspicions as to her identity. But that doesn't concern me. The part that does is that, through my visit to Warren's Stores, Prince Milo has been set free from his long bondage. Maud and he will wait a year, till this sensation has been forgotten for something else, and then they will be married.

We are going to Cowes to-morrow, and I have *heaps* to do.

Your worst but most loving pupil,  
PEGGY.



### A Spring Shower

**A** SUDDEN shadow o'er the fields, a cloud across the blue!  
The budding maples gather close their veils of rosy hue;  
The greening willows bend and sway, the romping breezes call,  
And then upon the startled earth the rushing rain-hordes fall.

The shadow passes from the fields; skies azure-steeped once more  
Smile on the joyous, spring-time world as softly as before.  
The sunbeams kiss the velvet turf, with sparkling crystals wet,  
And lo! Each tender, fragrant drop becomes a violet.

GRACE E. CRAIG.



BY EDWARD BOLTWOOD.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. A. LEMON

YOUNG Farley, of New York, began to be manager of his uncle's country music store on a Monday morning in June. He had not been in the village for several years, and he introduced himself to his assistant, who was knitting a red necktie for the clerk at Burton's coal yard.

"Now, Miss Lynch," said Farley briskly, "as I told Uncle Amos yesterday in the city, when I saw him off, I propose to shake the dry rot out of this concern in real metropolitan style before he gets back."

He paused in the removal of his cuffs, doubting whether it befitted his novel dignity.

"I'm going to put in a hot line of picture postal cards," he went on, "and tennis goods on the side shelves for the summer people. We might as well clear out those cheap fiddles right away and dump 'em in the loft."

Miss Lynch seemed dazed, and she ran her fingers up and down the frayed corner of the pile of sheet music, while Farley mounted a ladder.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "Where'd you get the bust of Dave Warfield?"

"That's Be—I mean Bay—thoven," said Miss Lynch faintly. "Or Moze-art."

The manager grabbed the plaster image, and immediately heard the front door open behind him. It was

not agreeable to be found on the top of a ladder, like an office boy, by his first customer.

"What shall we do for you, sir?" he demanded brusquely.

"Good morning," said the stranger. "It is Mr. Farley, yes? Good morning, good morning!"

He was a gray-haired, short, slender man with girlishly blue eyes. He made an old-fashioned and ceremonious bow to Farley, and then calmly hung his soft hat on a peg behind the desk.

"Well, good morning," Farley growled sarcastically. "Take this, Miss Lynch, will you? Who's your nervy friend in the velveteen coat?"

"That's only Mr. Reibler," said she, blowing the dust from Beethoven.

"Uncle Amos didn't mention—does he work here?"

"No. He's night watchman, down to the sash and blind factory."

"Ever buy anything?"

Miss Lynch giggled an embarrassed negative, and Reibler trotted forward, with his thin hands outstretched toward the statuette.

"Ach, the beloved Herr Ludwig!" he cried eagerly. "Always I said he was there too far in the dark! Now he goes where the sun shines for him, yes? That is good! And shall we care, too, for the poor, silent violins? That is good, also!"

Farley passed the condemned fiddles to Miss Lynch, and Reibler arrayed them in a row on the counter, wiping them with his ample silk handkerchief. The new manager wondered irritably what the boys on Forty-second Street would say if they happened in. When the shelves were emptied, he jumped down.

"Listen, Mr. Reibler," said he. "I was just telling Miss Lynch—this isn't going to be a country store while I'm in charge. No useless dry rot, you understand. And for one thing, I can't have any"—he balked on the word—"any loafers," he concluded hastily.

"So?" murmured the old German. "I did not know—pardon, I did not know."

He bowed, put on his hat, and walked out. Miss Lynch looked queer, and appeared to be on the point of speech, but checked herself. Farley attacked the pile of sheet music, slamming down a bundle of songs on the show case with scornful violence.

"Flee as a Bird to the Mountains," "he sniffed. "Oh, holy Moses!"

"You'll find the sacred music in the corner cupboard," observed his assistant primly.

A young matron entered.

"Good day, madam," said Farley. "What do you wish, madam?"

The matron started, and blushed delicately.

"Well, our—our Musical Club," she faltered. "We—we're planning to have a social next month, and I thought if I could find some nice soprano selections I—"

"Certainly, madam," responded Farley. "Any particular song?"

"Why, no," she said, glancing helplessly around the shop. "I'll just sit down until Mr. Reibler comes in."

She appropriated a stool, and gave a nod to Miss Lynch, who grinned rather maliciously at Farley.

"He's gone home, Mrs. Watkins," said the girl, "for to-day."

"I'm expecting a shipment this afternoon, madam," said Farley, "of the latest Broadway song hits. Perhaps if you'll call about five—or, madam, if

you prefer to look over our present stock——"

But the visitor's hand was on the door knob.

"Oh, thank you," she declined. "I guess I'll wait till to-morrow. Thank you."

"That's how it'll be," said Miss Lynch, encouraged by Farley's frown. "Everybody sort of likes to ask Mr. Reibler about things. He hasn't any folks or anybody, and he got to spending his time here, when he isn't working or sleeping. He's terribly fond of music—old music, mostly. Of course, you weren't wise to it, being new, but people will miss him. You wait."

She was right. When Farley walked into the store early on Tuesday he was vaguely relieved to discover Reibler's hat hanging on the peg, and Reibler himself arranging wild flowers in front of Beethoven in the sunny window.

"Oh, well, don't hurry away just yet," grumbled Farley. "There's a Mrs. Watkins coming in to see you, and some pig-tailed kids, and the leader of the town band."

## II.

Reibler's clients consulted him chiefly in the mornings; at midday he slept in his forlorn lodgings, but late in the afternoon he was at the store again.

In a shadowy rear room were a few broken-down pianos, and Reibler kept one of them in tune, after a fashion. Here he would sit by the hour, often dreaming in silence, sometimes peacefully touching the yellow keys. Then, through the dusk of the dreary room, would sparkle the pageant of his youth—pictures of vine-clad homesteads and a majestic river, of gentle maids and sturdy men, singing the brave old songs of the Fatherland.

Therefore he was not surprised when a dreamy voice behind him, soft as the sigh of a sleeping child, echoed the air which he had been playing.

"Ah, yes!" spoke the angelic voice.

"I remember!"

Reibler, looking around, stroked his forehead tremulously. The angel was tall and very beautiful. A mysterious





*In his trepidation his feeble fingers stumbled over the keyboard.*

gossamer cloud encircled her face and shimmered from her superb shoulders to the floor.

"Remember?" Reibler quavered.  
The vision tossed back the hood of her gossamer automobile cloak.

"I haven't remembered it since I was a girl in Carlsruhe," she said, with a pretty laugh, "and that was twenty—oh, long enough ago, I can tell you! The students used to sing it under the trees."

"Yes, in the springtide evenings," murmured Reibler, and he stood timidly. "Pardon, gracious lady," he said. "I think it out—you are from Carlsruhe? And I, also, from the Rhine country."

She smiled into his wistful eyes and held out her hand before replying.

"I am an American," said she, "but I understand. I studied for years in Germany, and I love it. My name is Bonbright—Mrs. Bonbright. We have taken a place near here for the summer, Herr—"

"Reibler," he stammered.

"Now, you shall play other songs for me, Herr Reibler, and I shall sing." She made a charming moue of defiance. "I shall sing in spite of them all," added Mrs. Bonbright.

"But such of a beast piano!"

"When music," she quoted, "is in the heart, what matters the lute?"

"Ach, schön!" assented Reibler blissfully.

In his trepidation, his feeble fingers stumbled over the keyboard. But Mrs. Bonbright was not amused. She sang quietly; and the hushed, exquisite notes fell from her red lips like the petals from a rose.

Farley bustled up from the post office when he saw the touring car stop in front of the store. A gentleman and a child were in the tonneau. The gentleman seemed to hear a sound from the store which disquieted him. His fine face darkened anxiously, until a tall, beautiful lady emerged. She had a roll of paper in her hand. Farley blinked at her and entered the shop gasping.



"A little ballad of home I wrote once," said Reibler.

"Do you know who that is, Miss Lynch?" he said excitedly.

"I heard her say her name was Bonbright," answered his assistant. "She can sing lovely!"

"Sing?" sputtered Farley. "Sing? Half a dozen years ago there were more photographs of her on Broadway than there are of Maude Adams! Sing? She's Gracia de Gex, that's all—Gracia de Gex!"

"Bonbright—name—heard," articulated Miss Lynch, open-mouthed.

"She married a millionaire guy," said Farley. "He took her off the stage. Now they want her back—Hammerstein and Casazza, and the whole of

'em. I read it out of the *Dramatic Chronicle* last week. And the story claimed that there's sort of a row on between her and Bonbright about it."

"Well, she'd ought to stay with her home and her husband and children," Miss Lynch argued, thinking tenderly of the clerk at the coal yard.

"What did you sell her?" Farley asked. "It's a bully ad! She came out with a parcel. What did she buy?"

"Nothing from me," said the girl. "She just rubbered around for a minute and went to talk with Mr. Reibler. She did have a parcel with her when she came out—that's so."

"I'm glad somebody had the sense to make a sale," declared Farley.

He questioned Reibler, who responded as if in a trance.

"What?" snapped the manager. "You didn't sell her anything? Then what—"

"A little ballad of home I wrote once," said Reibler. "A setting of Heine—that she took. Nobody has ever sung it. She said that some day she would sing it for me. It is the only music I ever dared to write. She will sing it."

"She will—like thunder!" Farley sneered and guffawed uproariously. "She must have joshed you for certain! And this shop is here to do business for Amos Farley, not for you, recollect that. Miss Lynch, there'll be a truckman here to-morrow to snake out all those pianos in the back room. I've sold 'em for junk."

### III.

As the automobile flew over the road Mrs. Bonbright spread Reibler's faded manuscript on her lap.

"He's the dearest, quaintest relic, Harry," she said to her husband. "You can't imagine! And so is his song." She hummed a line. "A jumble of phrases from old fireside *lieder*, but he fancies it original. And I'm going to sing it for him at the musicale in the casino on the hill. It will make him pleased and proud as a king, before all those people!"

Bonbright looked grave.

"You know you ought not to sing yet, Grace. You know what Doctor Van Deusen said, and the others."

"I believe you bribed every specialist in the land that time," she asserted, laughing. "Don't be absurd, Harry. I haven't really used my voice in more than a year. My throat is as strong as it ever was. It won't cave in again."

"If it does," said Bonbright, "your singing has gone forever, according to the doctors."

He spoke not only without regret, but almost hopefully; and his wife, leaning forward, caressed the curls of her little boy, who was sitting with the chauffeur. Bonbright caught her hand passionately.

"Don't be angry with me for wishing it," he entreated. "My darling, we want you for ourselves—Hal and the baby and I—for our own fireside. We can't share you with the world. Shall I tell you what scares me? What somebody wrote—that the smell of the footlights, once in the nostrils, never is lost. It's as bad as opium."

"Yes," said Grace, "but I love you."

"Then why yield to the opium?" he persisted. "Why sing at the casino, for instance?"

"Yes, as bad as opium," she repeated; and raised her moody eyes to meet an approaching dogcart, of which the occupants were waving frantically. "Why, it's the Martines!" she said. "Stop the car, Pierre!"

The trap pulled up.

"Oh, Mrs. Bonbright!" called Miss Martine. "We've sold two hundred tickets! That means a heap of cash for the hospital, doesn't it? A great sensation—your first appearance, after so long—like your return to the stage, you know. They say some of the big impresarios will be on hand to hear you. How do you do, Mr. Bonbright?"

She drove on.

"Harry, I would escape now, if I could," said Grace. "But the important part is that I promised Herr Reibler."



*He bent forward, looking at his angel for the first time.*

#### IV.

It was, under favorable conditions, a long, wearisome climb from the village to the country club casino. On the night of the concert the rain fell in torrents. Reibler's flimsy umbrella was poor protection. He was obliged to rest often in the shelter of the dripping trees. For a week he had been feeling ill, lacking the solace of his ancient piano.

He was bewildered by the lights in the lobby, the gleam of jewels, the luxuriant laughter and splendor of the throng. Young Percy Martine, gayly officiating as doorkeeper, glanced at the shabby figure with jocosely suspicious when Reibler presented the card which Mrs. Bonbright had mailed to him.

Reibler leaned against the wall under the balcony of the brilliant assembly room. He had never been so happy in his life. The trill of the well-bred

voices around him was like music in itself. He inhaled the perfume of the flowers. He, too, had brought flowers, and he fingered his bouquet of field roses proudly. He knew that she would like them. She had told him that she liked wild flowers.

He quite begrudged the rapture which was compelled in him by a fashionable tenor and by a soul-searching, wonderful cellist. None of the amateur ushers had given a programme to Reibler; but the stir and rustle in the audience and finally the unprecedented outburst of applause assured him that she was coming on the platform.

The Bonbrights' butler, who had been on duty in the cloak room, took a place at Reibler's quivering elbow.

"She is the loveliest, sir, is it not so?" Reibler whispered.

"Lawd, yes!" breathed Hibbs fervently.

The butler was much astonished be-

cause his humble neighbor did not join in the tempest of handclapping that followed Mrs. Bonbright's first number, a showy and difficult aria from a modern French opera.

"Didn't that suit you, old son?" Hibbs inquired, with scorn.

Reibler could not speak. He bent forward, looking at his angel for the first time. She went to the piano and laid a manuscript on the rack; the accompanist gave her his seat. Reibler's heart leaped joyously. It was good that she should sing his song alone, unaided.

"Das Meer hat seine Perlen,  
Der Himmel seine Sterne—"

The German's twitching white face alarmed Mr. Hibbs; for Mr. Hibbs could not suspect that, if ever a foretaste of Heaven was vouchsafed to mortality, Reibler then and there was blessed with it. During the pause before the final stanza of the song, Hibbs grasped Reibler's arm.

"Hold up, now," said the butler. "A bit sick, aren't you?"

It seemed that Mrs. Bonbright was prolonging the pause unusually. She turned slightly from the audience, and her left hand fluttered for an instant at her neck. But she finished the song, and arose, and her shining eyes gazed straight into Reibler's across the room. She swayed a little, and the hand went to her throat again. Reibler groped for the door, forgetting his flowers, blinded by a golden mist of joy.

The doorkeepers did not stare at him now. They were staring at something else. Young Martine was on tiptoe, peering over the heads of the audience.

"By Jove, she's fainting!" he exclaimed. "What is it?"

"She isn't fainting, Percy," said a bystander. "It's her throat again. I remember the first time in London—years ago—"

Unheeding and unheeded, Reibler drifted on. A good-hearted coachman guided him through the clanking troop of horses and the puffing machines in front of the casino. He tottered slowly down the hill.

Jim McMahon, substituting that

night for Reibler at the factory, was badly frightened when the German staggered silently into the dark office. Jim carried the old man to a sofa, snapped on the electric, tore open Reibler's collar, and chafed his wrists and temples with awkward kindness. After a few minutes Jim called up the village hospital on the telephone.

"*Der Himmel seine Sterne*," crooned Reibler happily, pressing some wild roses to his lips.

## V.

The doctors could do nothing for Reibler. He was too worn and old, too ready for the placid end which came so speedily.

"A nurse told me he never knew anything at all since that evening," said Miss Lynch to Farley. "Just lay there, and smiled, and sort of hummed that song."

Farley raised the window curtains in the music store. The store had been closed during the services; it was Farley who thought of doing that.

"And the song killed him," resumed the girl abruptly. "Going to hear her sing his home song that evening was what made the pneumonia so bad. And the papers say Mrs. Bonbright can't ever sing in public any more."

"He's better off for hearing it, maybe," mused Farley. "I suppose they're all better off—she, and her kids, and her husband. It was her home song, too."

"Yes," said Miss Lynch. "How sweet it was of her to send to New York for that splendid boy choir! Did you know she's given a lot of money to Mrs. Watkins, so's there'll be a memorial concert every year for him? And all those flowers—with the little withered bunch of wild roses!"

The girl dropped her head on the pile of sheet music. Farley glared malevolently into the emptiness of the rear room. He was sorry now that he had been so metropolitan; for he would have been exceedingly glad to see a certain battered piano in the corner, and to feel that it had been, and would be, always there.

# THE RING AND THE RING MASTER

By  
*Rupert Hughes*

Author of "The Invention of Opera," "Modern French Opera," "The Greatest of Opera Composers," etc.

A FUGITIVE for debt and refused a job in a chorus, a despised and abhorred and unheard composer, a political exile, then a stormy crusader against the widest and wildest campaign of abuse and ridicule in the history of art, then the most successful composer that ever lived, and finally again a political exile because he had become so powerful that he was called the Pope of Music—this is a scenario of the life of Wagner.

Though he chose music as his career, and music is ordinarily the most aloof from reality of all the arts, he brought it into intimate contact with nearly every phase of human activity. Through his music he invaded the drama, fiction, essay, poetry, mythology, religion, legend, history, politics, revolution, finance, architecture, painting. Bernard Shaw even finds economical treatises in the librettos, for he says in his book, "The Perfect Wagnerite":

The most inevitable dramatic conception of the nineteenth century is that of a perfectly naïve hero upsetting religion, law, and order in all directions, and establishing in their place the unfettered action of Humanity doing exactly what it likes, and producing order instead of confusion thereby, because it likes to do what is necessary for the good of the race. Whoever does not understand that, in terms of "The Ring" philosophy, change from godhead to humanity is a step higher and not a degradation, misses the whole point of the "Ring." The danger is that you will jump to the conclusion that the gods, at least, are a higher order than the human order. On the contrary, the world is waiting for man to redeem it from the lame and cramped government of the gods. Once grasp that, and the

allegory becomes simple enough. After all, a god is a pitiful thing. From toad and serpent to dwarf, from bear and elephant to giant, from dwarf and giant to a god with thoughts, with comprehension of the world, with ideals. Why should it stop there? Why should it not rise from the god to hero? To the creature in whom the god's unavailing thought shall have become effective will and life, who shall make his way straight to truth and reality over the laws of *Fricka* and the lies of *Loki* with a strength that overcomes giants and a cunning that outwits dwarfs?

In the last article we followed Wagner's life to the peak he reached with his overpoweringly beautiful romance, "Tristan and Isolde." This opera was composed when Wagner was forty-six, but he was fifty-one before it was produced.

Meanwhile, when his financial affairs were in most desperate straits and he had borrowed nearly all that men like Liszt could scrape up to lend him, he was visited by one of those fairy-story happenings that brighten real life once or twice a century. The King of Bavaria, Ludwig II., a madman with streaks of genius, became interested in his music and sent for him. So obscure was Wagner that the messenger was six months in finding him and had almost despaired when he discovered him in Stuttgart and informed him that he had been put upon the pension list with a yearly stipend of about five hundred dollars. In Wagner's words: "My creditors were quieted, and I could go on with my work."

He became naturalized as a Bavarian and settled in Munich; his stipend was



increased, and a house given to him. Now "Tristan and Isolde" reached a performance and "The Mastersingers" was completed, twenty-two years after its commencement. It was produced in Munich in 1868.

Now also Wagner's life-dream, his pyramid-monument, began to be realized. In 1848 he had written the drama, "Siegfried's Death." In 1853 he had finished all the librettos of his "Ring" trilogy. Ten years later he published the text, despairing of ever finishing the music, but now, under the king's patronage, he resumed the music, completing "Siegfried" and the "Ring of the Nibelungs" in 1869, and "The Dusk of the Gods" in 1874. The actual production of these works took place in 1876, nearly thirty years after their beginning, and at a time when Wagner was sixty-three years old.

By this time the ignored, the opposed, the starveling, had become the pet of the king and so world-wide a favorite that funds were subscribed in various countries to build him a theatre on his own plans exclusively for his own works.

Bayreuth became a place of pilgrimage, and this musical Mohammed had his own Mecca.

In his sixty-fifth year he began his opera "Parsifal" which he finished and produced in his sixty-ninth year, in which year he fell ill. He went to Venice, where he died three months short of his three-score years and ten. His life was a life of perhaps the most extraordinary delays, the most extraordinary failures, and the most extraordinary triumphs in all art-history.

To tell the plot of Wagner's "Ring" series is to outline old German mythology. He exploited it in a trilogy—a sort of Irish trilogy, for it has four parts. He called it "A stage-festival for three days and a fore-evening." It bears a very close resemblance to Greek tragedy, which was also written in groups of three plays and sung to music written by the dramatist. Wagner's quadruple festival is called "The Ring of the Nibelungen" because it concerns

a bit of consecrated gold stolen from the river Rhine by one of the Nibelungs, a race of hideous gnomes dwelling in the core of the earth in the "home of mists," the *Nebelheim*. This ring became the subject of endless battle between dwarfs, men, heroes, and gods, bringing disaster on all.

The prologue, or fore-evening, is called "The Rhine-gold." The scene opens upon the depths of the river Rhine, whose three daughters have been set to guard the Rhine-gold. They frolic and sing in the waters, and their beauty attracts a loathsome Nibelung named *Alberich*. He offers grotesque love to them, but they make sport of him. Suddenly the Rhine-gold awakes and glows, and *Alberich* asks what it is. The Rhine maidens indiscreetly taunt him with his ignorance of the fact that a ring made of this nugget would give the bearer limitless power. But he who takes it must forswear love. This *Alberich* does gladly and, clambering up, he seizes the gold. Darkness falls upon the river and the wildly lamenting nymphs.

The scene changes to the cliffs opposite Walhalla, the new home of the gods, which *Wotan*, the Jupiter of the Germans, has had constructed by the giants, *Fafner* and *Fasolt*. For wages he had promised them his wife's sister, *Freia*, the goddess of youth, love and joy. *Wotan's* wife, *Fricka*, upbraids him for his infidelities much as Juno used to curtain-lecture Jupiter.

*Wotan*, who had lost an eye in winning *Fricka*, assures her that he trusts the god of lies, *Loki*, to get him out of the bargain with the giants. *Loki* arrives and announces that there is but one ransom for *Freia*, and that is the ring which *Alberich* wears. The only thing which any man would exchange for woman and love is power. *Freia* is woman and love, but the ring is power. *Wotan* determines to rob the robber.

The thread that binds the operas together is the rise and fall of this god, *Wotan*, though he becomes rather bore-some in his wanderings through the score, for he is ever bewailing and ever narrating what has happened before

the rise of the curtain, between the acts and between the operas. Whole epochs are supposed to pass in these intervals, and *Wotan* manages to give the effect of ages, especially to American listeners, who are familiar neither with the legendary lore nor with the poetic subtleties of the text.

Perhaps a general statement of *Wotan's* career will best simplify the tangle of this great series. The German gods, like the Greek, were very human and full of guile. *Wotan* had risen from being only one of the gods to being their political boss. He had reduced the other gods to the rank of Tammany sachems and he had done this by corruption of various sorts.

He wields a potent lance on which the treaties with the other gods are inscribed. He had torn this lance from the boughs of the world-ash-tree, and for the privilege of drinking at the fountain of knowledge and winning the goddess, *Fricka*, for wife he had paid one of his eyes. But he had not been true to his costly wife. He outraged *Erda*, the all-mother, and she bore him nine daughters, or Valkyries. He determined to build a great palace and fortress, a sort of sublime Tammany Hall, for the delight and the defense of himself and his subservient gods. He persuaded the giants to build it for him, offering his wife's sister, *Freia*, as their wages, though she was the goddess of youth. In his search for power and pleasure he had stopped at no lie, no perjury, no ruthlessness.

He trained his daughters to hover over battlefields and bring to Walhalla the soldiers who died as heroes, that they might serve as a garrison against his increasing enemies.

He wandered the earth as Jupiter did, begetting sons and daughters enough to form a tribe called the Volungs. He chose one of his children, *Siegmund*, to be his special hero and defender, and reared him up himself in disguise. And he left in an old tree a great sword called "Nothing" or "Need" for this hero's refuge in the hour of necessity.

But his lies and treacheries and in-

fidelties recoil upon him and at length overwhelm him and his whole gang of gods. "The Decline and Fall of *Wotan*" is the theme of the series of Wagner's operas.

In the first of the operas, the Rhine-gold is stolen, as we have seen, by the Nibelung dwarf, *Alberich*. He makes a ring of it and enslaves his fellows, forcing them to heap up gold for his greed.

*Wotan* tricks and overpowers *Alberich* and robs him of the ring and the gold, but, knowing as he does that the ring is stolen, he does not honorably restore it to the river. He keeps it for himself until he is forced to give it up in a shameful bargain.

He had promised the giants the goddess of youth, *Freia*, as payment for building Walhalla. They drag her away, and the gods begin to wither like old apples. He offers the giants gold enough to hide her if they will release her. They accept, and he heaps before her the gold he had burglarized from *Alberich*.

But there is not quite enough to hide her form; one little chink remains, and they demand the ring. At length he hands it over to them, and immediately its bale sets them to war. *Fafner* kills his brother, *Fasolt*, and then like a miser retires to a cave to gloat over his ring, even changing himself to a dragon to frighten thieves away.

At *Freia's* return youth and sunlight and a rainbow brighten Walhalla again, but the opera ends in the foreboding of tragic fate.

The next opera, "The Valkyries," concerns the mishaps of *Wotan's* favorite son, *Siegmund*, and his favorite daughter, *Brünnhilde*. *Siegmund*, pursued by his enemies, takes refuge in the hut of one of them, named *Hunding*. *Hunding's* wife is *Siegmund's* twin sister, *Sieglinde*, stolen in childhood.

With the peculiar morals of primeval times, brother and sister fall in love and elope, taking with them the sword "Nothing" which *Siegmund* finds in the tree.

*Wotan* tells his daughter, *Brünnhilde*, that he wants her to protect *Siegmund*

in the fight with the pursuing *Hunding*. But the outraged husband, *Hunding*, has prayed to *Fricka*, the goddess of wedlock, and she comes to her outrageous husband to demand the triumph of decency.

*Wotan* is as much afraid of his shrewish wife as Jupiter was of Juno, and her indignation at his protecting his illegitimate children in their incestuous elopement strikes even *Wotan* as justified. Reluctantly he gives her his oath. He sends for *Brünnhilde* and tells her that *Siegmond* must die.

He pours forth his woe. Unable to take from *Fafner* the ring he had paid him, and fearing that *Alberich* may recover it and dethrone him, *Wotan* had planned that *Siegmond* should capture the ring of his own free will and restore it to the Rhine. And now he must slay his own son, his redeemer.

*Brünnhilde* sees beyond her father's command and determines to obey his secret wishes. She tries to protect *Siegmond* from death at *Hunding's* hand, but *Wotan* himself appears and touches the great sword "Nothing" with his all-potent lance; the sword is shattered apart, and *Siegmond* is slain. But *Hunding* is also slain from the mere glance of horror *Wotan* casts upon him.

*Brünnhilde* meanwhile flees from the scene with the pieces of the sword "Nothing," and hides *Sieglinde* in the depths of a forest where she is to become mother of a child of *Siegmond's*.

*Wotan* pursues *Brünnhilde* and finds her among her terrified sister Valkyries. He disowns and curses her for her disobedience and declares that he will rob her of her godhood and leave her defenseless and asleep by the roadside, to be the prey and slave of the first passer-by.

She begs that he will at least surround her with fire, that only a fearless hero shall dare approach her. To this he consents, and the broken-hearted father, seeing his son dead, consigns his daughter to a mystic sleep with a last kiss, closes her helmet, and laying her shield over her, spreads around her a circle of magic fire. Even here his

cruelty asserts itself, for the fire is the god *Loki* who had served *Wotan* faithfully and is now enslaved. The wonderful spiritual, musical, and scenic beauty of this scene closes this great opera.

The third opera is "*Siegfried*." It is a sun-illuminated interlude of youth, laughter, knightly emprise, and love. In Runciman's words:

*Siegfried* is the most glorious assertion ever made of the joy and splendor and infinite beauty to be found in life by those who possess the courage to go through it in their own way. *Siegfried* is the embodiment of the divine energy that makes life worth living, and the music *Siegfried* has to sing is the richest, most copious stream of melody ever given to one artist.

The first act shows *Siegmond's* son just blooming into manhood. His mother had died and left him to the care of the dwarf, *Mime*, who has kept the pieces of the sword "Nothing" and tried to forge it anew in vain. It will not unite for him. But *Siegfried* wants a sword, and *Mime* wants him to slay the dragon, *Fafner*. Every sword *Mime* makes breaks in *Siegfried's* hands. The dwarf has marveled at the lad's absolute fearlessness. Finally he confesses the truth about the boy's mother, his name, and his father's sword. *Siegfried* determines to try his own hand at welding the shattered blade. In a scene of exalted gayety he succeeds, and at a stroke slashes the anvil in two. He sets forth hilariously to slay the dragon, *Fafner*, and the woods are wonderful to him. When he meets the fire-breathing, venom-spurting dragon, he laughs, and darting here and there slays him.

Now a forest bird tells *Siegfried* of the ring and the "Tarnhelm" or invisible helmet, which *Siegfried* rescues from the cave. *Mime* tries to poison him with a drugged horn of wine, but *Siegfried* understands his wile, and slays the dwarf. Then the forest bird sings to the hero of *Brünnhilde* and leads him toward the defile where the Valkyr sleeps.

On the way he meets his grandsire, *Wotan*, who warns him away, and threatens him with the dreadful lance.

But *Siegfried*, who laughs at everything, laughs even at this, and the good sword "Nothung" has its revenge, for it shatters the great spear, and *Wotan* vanishes in a storm.

*Siegfried* pushes on, and the flames give way before him. At last he finds and awakens the sleeping beauty with a kiss. *Brünnhilde* resists at first, for she regrets her lost godhood, but then she declares herself human. Let the gods die as they deserve! She has learned to love—a man. This wonderful idyllic opera ends in a rapturous duet.

The final work in the trilogy is again as gloomy as its story and its title demand, "Die Götterdämmerung" or "The Gloaming of the Gods." The first scene shows the three Norns weaving the golden rope of destiny near the mighty branches of the world-ash from which *Wotan* had torn his lance. The curse of *Alberich* begins to be consummated, and the rope of destiny parts in the middle. The Norns, themselves doomed, sink into the earth as *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde* appear.

She has taught him wisdom as he has taught her love. She gives him her war horse, Grane, and he departs on his errand, swearing fidelity and leaving the ring as pledge.

The innocent *Siegfried* walks into a trap laid for him by a family of Gibichungs, among whom is *Hagen*, the villainous son of the dwarf *Alberich*. They receive *Siegfried* as a guest, but in his cup they put a love philter which renders him oblivious of *Brünnhilde* and infatuated with *Hagen's* half sister, *Gutrune*. So blinded is he with the potion that he consents to bring *Brünnhilde* by force as a bride for *Gutrune's* brother, *Gunther*.

This astounding thing he does in the form of *Gunther*, which the magic helmet enables him to assume. He takes the ring from the horrified *Brünnhilde* and puts it on his own finger; then he drags her to the palace. *Brünnhilde*, seeing *Siegfried* about to marry *Gutrune*, believes him unutterably treacherous and betrays to *Hagen* the fact that

in one point he is vulnerable—between the shoulders. There *Hagen* drives his spear, and *Siegfried* dies. He is carried home on his shield to the music of a famous funeral march.

*Gunther*, horrified at the murder, confesses the truth, and is slain by *Hagen*. *Brünnhilde*, understanding the cause of her poor lover's unconscious treachery, places his body on a funeral pyre and joins him in the flames, calling the Rhine to come and get the long-lost, far-wandered gold.

And so the river rises indeed, and the Rhine maidens, struggling with *Hagen*, drown him and float away exultant in the return of the Rhine-gold. In the sky *Walhalla* crumbles and falls with all its splendor and all its shame.

Besides the splendid characterization which Wagner the librettist has given his characters, there is the gorgeous musical characterization given them by Wagner the composer. Each person, each important dramatic motive, has its definite musical label or "leading-motive." Thus the wonderful phrase which typifies the sword "Nothung" recurs whenever the thought of the sword and its mission occurs in the text. So the ring has its motive, *Walhalla* has its, and so on *ad infinitum ad gloriam*.

In this way the music has become a sort of puzzle-picture in which the curious find faces everywhere. But the best thing is to listen to the operas as operas. They will be found of the most thrilling beauty, the most appealing pathos, and the most uplifting majesty.

Every one finds some fault with Wagner, but that is because he is a mountain, a huge bulk of a soul with black caverns, scarred edges, barren wastes, and empty craters. He has been weather-stained, mud-spattered, lightning-struck, dynamite-blasted, but still he is a mountain; his thrust is upward, the peak is snow and sunshine, and he commands the horizon. He belongs with the master heights of human glory, with Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Michelangelo, Beethoven; and he is of a bigness with the biggest.



ILLUSTRATED BY H. VON S. LUCAS

OCTOBER 17, 190—: To-night, "dear diary," as the girls used to write when mother was young, I feel almost like acknowledging that I don't know quite so much as I thought I did in the seclusion of Chelsea, Mass. The city of New York is a different proposition when one is set down in front of the Grand Central Station from what it seems at the family tea table in our part of the world. I've been here five days, I've tramped the soles off a pair of shoes, I've interviewed seventy-five lodging and boarding-house keepers and about a thousand and seventy-five individuals or firms which I thought might be in need of my services—and I've only just got the promise of a roof over my head, and I haven't even a promise of a job. Aunt Miranda said it would be so. She said it buttering her soda biscuit at the supper table last Friday night, and she advised mother not to let me come.

"Mark my words, Luella," she said, "you'll regret it if you do let Joanna

go. Why ain't she doing well enough here, I'd like to know?"

"I always calculate to let the children have their own way when it ain't sinful, Miranda," said mother mildly, "and if Joanna's set her heart on going to New York and trying what she can do there, I ain't going to try to prevent her. I know she'll always be mindful of her mother at home here, and that she can't go far astray while she is that."

"Huh!" said Aunt Miranda—of course she never married; that's the reason she's got more theories to the square inch about bringing up children and managing husbands than all the married women in Chelsea—"Huh! I wasn't thinking about Joanna's taking to crime—card playing or dancing or drunkenness—though I do hear they ain't thought no more of in New York than an oyster supper here, but I was thinking of her with no proper place to live; a measly little room somewhere, with one of them shut-up beds



in it, and never a stove in the house where she can warm her feet or dry her skirts on rainy days. They don't give you half enough to eat in those boarding houses, anyway, I've heard tell."

Mother's eyes filled with tears and she looked at me pitifully.

"Joanna's coming home if she can't make out to be comfortable—she's promised me," said mother.

"Gracious, Aunt Miranda!" I cut in. I could have slapped her with pleasure when I saw mother's eyes filling up like that. "You'd think I was a perfect ninny. I'm twenty-two and it's a pity if I can't find a comfortable place to live in a city where several million other people manage to survive, and not more than half of them millionaires at that!"

"Maybe," grunted Aunt Miranda. "We'll see what we'll see. For my part I'll bet—though that's only a form of speech, for I don't hold with gambling—there'll be many a day you'll wish for your desk in Thompson and Co.'s coal and wood office, and for your own bed in your own mother's house, to say nothing of your mother's baked beans and brown bread."

Aunt Miranda was right. So far there have been five of those days and five of those nights.

I came to the Margaret Louisa, of course. Every girl who comes to New York for the first time to look for work and a lodging place goes to the Margaret Louisa, if she has a good, evangelical family like mine, that believes in the Y. W. C. A., the C. E., and all such organizations of virtue. The Margaret Louisa is all right enough, although I think we Christian ladies here may look at one another with a little more grim suspicion than the Christian-or-not-as-the-case-may-be ladies of an ordinary hotel do. However, that's neither here nor there. It's clean and sanitary and pretty and wholesome and cheap—while it lasts. It's only for emergencies, however. You can't lodge here permanently. And you're liable to have to share your room with some one. The other neat iron bed in my room

and the other neat oak chest of drawers, and the other hooks, are occupied by a young lady who has snubbed me ever since she found out that I was nothing but a stenographer looking for work. She's going to study for grand opera.

As I was saying, I have interviewed about seventy-five landladies; blondined landladies with Turkish cozy corners in their parlors, and long, dirty, light wrappers on their persons, who didn't care whether I was married or not and who had one "large front room, furnished as a sitting and bedroom"; gray-haired landladies in black cashmere who wouldn't have "single ladies" on their premises for love or money; grand, portly landladies in silk skirts and fine shirt-waists who had negro men to open the doors into their halls, with palms and rubber plants growing up and down the sides, but who had nothing which they thought would suit me, after they had taken stock of my ready-made suit and five-dollar hat. Oh, I was tired enough by the time I had tramped up and down a thousand flights of stairs and had inspected and been inspected by them all—the ones I wouldn't have had as a gift, and the ones who wouldn't have me on any terms. But to-day I did get something!

I don't know how I managed to strike the part of the city I did—I think I just plain got lost. But anyway I was walking in a queer, rambling neighborhood where the streets were too independent to follow a straight line and turned at right angles to themselves whenever they felt inclined that way. And suddenly I came upon a tiny pocket handkerchief of a park—not a right, proper, square pocket handkerchief, but a sort of triangular one. It had an iron rail around it and some seats inside. There were still a few brown leaves on its trees, and the grass was still green. I was tired and I didn't quite know where I was, so in I went and sat down along with an old gentleman, three babies, and a mother or two. I looked at the houses on either side of the triangle, and they were nice, old-fashioned ones; the bricks looked sort of mellow, and two



of them had dormer windows in their attics. It was the most home-like place I had seen in New York, and it made me real homesick.

Then, by and by, I spied a little white slip pasted next the door on one of the mellow-colored houses. I had learned to know that slip as far as I could see it; "furnished rooms to let," it always said, and then sometimes it added hospitably "with board." I stared at that house a long time. I was wondering whether it said "with board" or not. If it didn't, it was no use to me. Perhaps it wasn't anyway. I knew the street was not on the list of eminently safe boarding places the Margaret Louisa had furnished me, nor was it on the list I had made up out of the newspaper ads.

While I was staring at the house, some one came to a front window in the parlor and pulled up a curtain. Then she stood there, looking out. She was an old lady, with gray hair worn the way old ladies used to wear their hair before they became lecturers and physical culturists and all that—just parted and waved down over the tops of her ears and gathered into a modest little knot behind. And that blessed old lady had a piece of knitting in her hands. And a cat appeared on the window sill, and humped herself up in the sun.

"It's a leading," said I. And over I trotted. "With board" the white slip said. I rang the bell. A bare-armed, fat, good-natured-looking woman came up from the basement kitchen. Rooms to let? Sure, she said. Would I wait till the missus came home from marketing? I would. She ushered me into the parlor—a nice, shabby, clean, square room with a plain black marble mantelshelf and a little coal grate under it. The old lady with the knitting turned when I came in and smiled at me. I felt then that the missus' prices would have to be "something fierce," as Jimmie is always saying, to keep me from taking a room.

The old lady wasn't a bit stiff. She spoke about the weather and the sunny little folded pocket handkerchief of a

park opposite, and of her knitting, and of the cat. By and by it came out that she really lived down on Long Island, but that she came up to the city every fall and stayed until spring, and that she came to this part of the town because she had lived in it when she was a girl fifty years before.

Then the missus came in and eyed me and seemed satisfied with my looks, which are respectable, though I say it who shouldn't, and trotted me upstairs to see her rooms. The one I liked was a front room with a dormer window and no heat—that latter was merely an attribute, not the reason I liked it. It had the most miscellaneous assortment of furniture I had ever seen; a big black walnut bed that suggested cheerful thoughts of the number of people who had probably died in it, a yellow pine bureau, and an iron washstand; two chromos of a pair of pink, curly, round-legged infants labeled "Good Morning" and "Good Night" respectively, and one engraving of Washington crossing the Delaware; an old porch rocker, painted green, and a rickety little oak table. There was a faded-looking rag carpet on the middle of the floor, but it looked as if it had been faded by washing, not by the mere lapse of time, so I rather liked it.

The missus told me that all this could be mine, together with three meals per day, for the modest sum of eight dollars a week. I did some quick mental arithmetic and divided my three-years savings of one hundred and seven dollars by eight to see how long I could live in New York if I didn't get work, and then I told the missus that if she'd remove the black walnut sarcophagus and give me a plain iron bedstead instead, and if she'd remove the rickety little oak table and give me a decent, four-legged kitchen one with a drawer, and if she'd provide a gas heater for winter, we'd call it a trade.

She told me the bedstead was as handsome a piece of black walnut as I'd find anywhere; and I told her that I believed her, and that anyway I wasn't going about looking for black walnut, but that I wanted a little,



*"Huh! I wasn't thinking about Joanna's taking to crime—card playing or dancing."*

bright, white iron bedstead to sleep in. Finally she agreed to that. The kitchen table she yielded without a murmur, and then we haggled between seventy-five cents a week and fifty cents a week on the gas heater. Finally we compromised on sixty cents, and to-morrow I'm to rescue my trunk from the subterranean caves of the Margaret Louisa and rid the young lady who is going to study for grand opera of my plebeian society. For the next eight or nine weeks anyway I am Mrs. Morrison's lodger—Mrs. Morrison is the missus.

The old lady with the knitting smiled at me from a little chair in front of the grate as I passed the parlor door, and asked if I was coming, and when I

said that I was, she said she was glad to hear it; she liked young life, she told me, about her. And she's going to teach me to knit.

Now, Miss Joanna Eldridge, it's up to you to get a hustle on, and persuade somebody that his business will be a failure until he secures your valuable services!

*October 18:* I'm not Joanna Eldridge, late of Chelsea, Mass., eldest daughter of Mrs. Luella Eldridge, widow, who is endeavoring to bring up in the way they should go five children. I am not Joanna Eldridge, late slavey for Johnson and Co. at ten dollars per; I am Miss Cinderella, if you please,

and my fairy godmother is a nice little old lady on Grove Street, which was quite in the fashionable quarter when she was a girl, but which is now perilously near the slums; my fairy godmother has bright knitting needles of amber and ivory and steel, and quantities of pink and blue wool, and she must have a never-ending supply of grandchildren for all the dressing sacks that she knits.

I moved in upstairs this morning. The fairy godmother's room is directly over the parlor and as like it as two peas—grate, mantel, and all—and her door was comfortably open as I passed up in the wake of the expressman. She nodded and smiled and said that she was glad to see me and that I must come and warm myself by her grate if I felt chilled—the sunshine was so very deceptive these fall days!

Well, when I had paid the expressman his forty cents, and he had glowered at me and said that it was a very heavy trunk and those stairs were enough to break a man's back until I remembered his tip and gave him a dime, I went down to the old lady's door, and pretty soon we were talking like old friends. I let her know that I had come to New York seeking my fortune so that Jimmie, who is the brightest of us all, would stand some show of college, and how I hadn't found any work yet, though I had answered any number of advertisements.

She shook her head, and was so sweet and sorry for any one who had to work for money at all, and so impressed with my nobility in caring whether Jimmie went to college or grew up a heathen Chinnee—aren't people the funniest? To think that it's goodness or unselfishness or nobility that makes you do what your heart would break if it couldn't do!—and so full of good advice and warnings—she sounded like a column of "hints to the business girl" in a woman's magazine!—that we grew very chummy.

And suddenly she told me that she was sure I could get a place with the Meyer-Grimson Realty and Development Company. She was as excited as

possible. She told me about this land company that's doing wonderful things over on Long Island where tunnels and bridges and such are making nothing at all of distances.

"They've come after me about my old place near Huntington," she told me. "That's how I know about them. But, dear me, I don't want to sell, even if the place is mine to sell, which I'm not sure about." Her pretty, pink, wrinkled face clouded over. "I have a son—I think—unless—but never mind, my dear, I'll tell you later about that. Anyway, I don't think I want to sell the house where my husband and I lived so happily—I hope you may have as kind and indulgent a husband, my dear!—and where my children played when they were young. But the Meyer-Grimson people send beautiful young men in tall collars and light spats to see me every now and then, and they offer me a dollar or two an acre more. And I think I'll send you to them!" She laughed delightedly. "They've very big offices. I was in them once; all oak and mahogany tables and Turkey rugs and boys to take your cards and girls to take their dictation—Oh, really a dizzying place, my dear! And they seem to want my old farm quite badly"—she almost dimpled, the dear old conspirator—"so they'll think twice before they refuse any one I send them! I'll give you a note to Mr. Grimson—he's the one that is always offering me a dollar an acre more for Baylawns. That's the name of our place, my dear."

She was as pleased as Punch when she sat down to write the letter. I couldn't help thinking that if she had any children living they ought to look out for her. Of course in this case—in my case—it was all right and even highly laudable for her to be so friendly and intimate! But suppose she went about the world making acquaintances as readily as this; she might get her poor, dear, unsophisticated self in trouble some fine day! But I thanked her and took the note which she had addressed to "Mr. Barclay Grimson" in a fine, sloping hand, up to Thirty-fourth

Street, and then up a mile or so into the air to the gorgeous offices of the Meyer-Grimson Realty and Development Company.

At first I entered a corridor from which so much activity was on view as fairly took away my breath. There were offices opening on to it; a whole line of them, furnished very solidly and handsomely. I thought of Johnson and Co.'s office over the coal wharf, and laughed inside myself. There were men of all sorts, that one could glimpse from the corridor. There were maps and posters and advertisements. There were clicking machines, and there were buzzing telephones, and there were grand young men, with neatly pressed clothes and very magnificent neckties, hurrying from room to room with important papers in their hands. There were people waiting in the corridors—some of them looking as though they were there to explain why they found it difficult to pay this quarter's installment on their lots, some to demand a higher price for their acreage, some to see if they could bid on the contract for putting in streets or sewers or electric lights or whatnot in the latest "twenty-minutes-from Broadway" tract to be opened up for "homes on Long Island" by the Meyer-Grimson people.

Oh, it was a busy place, and I felt my own insignificance deeply when the boy to whom I had given my letter strolled back into the corridor—the office boys were the only leisurely creatures in the whole place—and told me that Mr. Grimson would see me in a few minutes.

The few minutes lengthened into half an hour—into an hour. I sat on like grim death. I couldn't afford to be a haughty Lady Imogene and leave. The other people who were waiting were ushered into one coop or another, had their interviews, hurried out, and were replaced by new sitters on the corridor settees. Still I waited.

Once I caught at the office boy who had taken my letter, and asked if Mr. Grimson was still engaged. He said he'd see, departed, and reappeared no

more. Finally one of the prosperous-seeming young men who had been walking importantly hither and thither, and who had once or twice glanced at me, paused and inquired if I was waiting to see any one in particular.

I felt hot all over. I was angry at being kept waiting interminably in a corridor, like a beggar, and somehow the perfect polish on the young man's boots made mine look dusty and shabby, and his well-kept hands with the roll of maps in them reproached my mended gloves, and his tweed clothes pointed the contrast to my ready-made serge. I felt like a marked-down piece of goods waiting on a bargain counter to be selected, and put to shame by the gorgeous things in cases near it. However, there was nothing for it but to muster up all the pride in my possession and to try to hold my head as though I were the sole owner of all the Meyer-Grimson territory, and dressed shabbily because I liked to, and to answer with assurance.

I did it, and the young man said that he would look Mr. Grimson up for me immediately. It was then discovered that Mr. Grimson had gone out to lunch half an hour before, and probably would not return for an hour more. My cheeks blazed with mortification and annoyance. Also I wanted to cry. You see, I needed the job. And then the blessed young man asked me if he could be of any use to me. I told him my errand, and watched his face narrowly to see his expression become less solicitous when he learned the purpose of my call.

But it didn't—it didn't change by a flicker! And he told me, somewhat to my amazement, that he knew there was a vacancy in the stenographic staff, and that it would be as well for me to see Mr. Petersen as any one else.

Whereupon he ushered me into the room of an elderly man, who looked like a pirate reclaimed by a good tailor, and told my errand. Mr. Petersen looked at me, without any expression on his face, then explosively asked for my experience and nodded with sufficient approval when he heard it. Then



*He repeated my words in a dazed sort of way.*

he inquired if I "leaked." I looked stupidly at my guide, and his eyes—he had very nice, clear, gray eyes—twinkled.

"That's Mr. Petersen's term for talk—blab," he explained.

I replied that I didn't talk about my employers' business and that even if I had a tendency that way, I couldn't indulge it to any great extent, as I was living alone in New York and was a stranger here.

"Good!" said Mr. Petersen in the same explosive sort of voice.

But I thought that the other one—whose name proved to be Fletcher—looked at me with a sort of friendly pity. Then, somehow or other, the conclusions were reached: I was to come on two weeks' trial at eighteen dollars a week. The hours would be from nine until five, and I was the especial possession of the "purchase de-

partment." The sales departments, the gas, the sewer, the concrete sidewalk, the three-thousand-dollar cottage, the five-thousand, the eight-thousand and goodness-knows-how-many-other-prices—departments, all have their own stenographers! Talk about specialization! Somehow I came away feeling that I was caught up in the stream of things in New York, that I was seeing Life with large capitals.

And if I live on ten dollars a week, and save eight, and maybe make a little more by doing overtime work, that will be three hundred—four hundred—a year saved toward Jimmie at Harvard. And Jimmie is a great boy for helping himself, too! Oh, the Eldridge fortunes are looking up!

*October 19:* My little old lady, who turns out to be a Mrs. Bleecker, was so pleased over the success of her note



that I hadn't the heart to tell her no one had ever really seen it. She has adopted me after a fashion. It's rather nice, although there may be moments when it's wearing.

Poor old soul, all her children but one died—all her girls, and "she did so love girls," she told me wistfully; one could dress them so prettily, and make such sweet things for them, and take such pride in their conquests! And she lost her two daughters before they had even "come out." She referred again mysteriously to the son; but she didn't enlarge, and of course I couldn't ask her anything outright.

The other people in the house are rather funny, as they show up at dinner. There's a large old clergyman, pastor of one of the poor churches in the neighborhood, an old-fashioned fire and brimstone preacher, they say, but rather pleasant and jokey here. And there are two clerks in some wholesale house below here, and one of their wives—I mean the wife of one of them; they aren't Mormons. And there's a woman doctor, only she doesn't practice; she's in one of the charity organization departments and does some sort of investigation or something in the neighborhood that fringes this quiet little backwater of a street. She scandalizes the clergyman by saying that she's an "agnostic high church woman," and she makes the clerk's wife's eyes pop out of her head by "dressing" for dinner. Not so very décolleté—but enough to mark the difference between dinner and breakfast.

She's rather interesting. She invited me into her room to-night. It's back of the old lady's, and has a big, cushion-crowded couch in it—and a smoking stand. I wonder how Aunt Miranda would feel if she knew that! And there's a crucifix, too. I'm nothing but a plebeian person from Chelsea, Mass., not so very long removed from a wholesale wood and coal office. That's probably the reason the combination in her room strikes me with an uncomfortable sense of blasphemy.

*October 21:* One of the girls at the office—her name is Hattie Lawlor, and she has a pompadour the size of a soup tureen, and she chews gum every single second, but she can make the keys jump for all that!—told me that the vacancy in the stenographic staff of the "sales department" occurred just twenty minutes before I got the position. One of the girls there—poor silly little fool!—had been chasing around with one of the men on the force, a married man. And the wife had heard about it and had just blown in and made a row that nearly raised the roof of the building. Old Man Petersen, who won't stand for rum-puses in the office, fired the silly little flirt at once; paid her two weeks' salary and sent her out. And "Dirk Fletcher," as Miss Lawlor somewhat pertly calls him, I think, heard of it, found out what I wanted—and presto! There you are! And here I am! His mother, Hattie Lawlor says with awe, was a Dirkman, though who the Dirkmans may have been is unknown to me!

*October 21—Midnight:* I just thought of something, lying there in bed, my mind buzzing with "parcel of lands bounded east and south and west and north so many rods by such and such things!" I just thought of something!

Is the reason that I got that job so easily just because they thought me too plain to attract any errant fancies in the office? Did I get the job because I'm homely, because I have not the attractions of what Hattie Lawlor calls a "trouble-breeder"? I shall light the gas and look at myself.

But there—every woman under ninety-five looks well in a long white kimono thing. And, to be sure, I have a healthy complexion and clear enough brown eyes; Jimmie has told me, in moments of brotherly admiration, soon over, that I have a regular thicket of eyelashes. And my hair is plentiful and shining enough, and my mouth is well enough equipped with white teeth. But I'm no beauty. I have no particular charm. I certainly have no "air."



I honestly do believe that Mr. Fletcher thought I would do to fill the vacancy because of my plainness. The beast! I wish I hadn't taken the old position!

*October 21*—One o'clock: Wait until he sees me in a real tailor-made!

*October 30*: Mr. Petersen is "the limit," as Jimmie would say. The things that man doesn't know about the king's English would fill a large and closely printed set of books. I have discovered that it is part of his stenographer's duty to put his thoughts into something approaching grammatical language, but it has to be done as delicately as if one were handling a basket of eggs.

One of the other girls—Hattie Lawlor, the busy gum chewer, to be exact—told me about that part of my duties. His letters have to be made presentable to the world, and at the same time his pride must never be offended by any suggestion that his choice of the parts of speech is at all unusual.

The day before yesterday I put into shape a letter which he dictated, and this morning he "called me down" good and hard for it. It seems that the man to whom it was written brought it in to make some inquiry concerning some of the terms offered, and Mr. Petersen blustered that his letter had not been at all ambiguous. Whereupon the other party produced it, and there it was—ambiguous all right, but with its ambiguity declared in perfectly acceptable language instead of Mr. Petersen's somewhat illiterate style. He promptly declared that his stenographer was the person at fault, sent for me, and gave me fits for my stupidity or my impertinence; he didn't know which it was, he said, but he didn't want his correspondence tampered with again. And everything I had done was to change a few incorrect singulars into the correct plurals, and a few untimely objectives into seasonable nominatives.

I was too taken by surprise to make any defense at the moment, and I dare say it is just as well, for Hattie Law-

lor says that it was all a bluff. Petersen is the member of the company whose especial province is to write the ambiguous letters to prospective sellers, and if they are keen enough to discover the ambiguity, he always puts it off on his stenographer. It's a pleasant job!

When I asked if the Meyer-Grimson Realty Company did not do a legitimate business, she laughed and said of course they did, but that every business, legitimate and otherwise, needed to have a letter writer whose letters were susceptible of two interpretations, one quite attractive to the correspondent receiving them, the other very profitable to the company signing them; only the latter interpretation must be the one which will hold in law! The coal business seems to me honest.

*November 3*: Pride had a fall this morning. My face scorches yet when I remember it. I was in the cubbyhole off Mr. Petersen's office, clicking out the stuff that I didn't get copied last night, when in came Mr. Fletcher. I have seen him several times since I have been here, and he always speaks to me pleasantly—more like a human being than an employing automaton, such as most of the rest of them seem. I can't help feeling sort of warmed and comforted when he passes through the room and smiles or stops for a minute to ask how I am getting on.

Well, this morning, as I said, he came in. After he had said "good morning," he stood looking out of the window at the big steel skeleton of a skyscraper they're putting up across the street. He said something, rather abstractedly, about skyscrapers and American architecture, and sort of loitered around. Then he went out, but he left me with the distinct feeling that he had not said all that he came to say.

In ten or fifteen minutes he was back, looking through the letter files for something which he didn't find. This time he stood for a few seconds watching my hands play on the keys, and he said something about flying butterflies.

Then he went out again. But in five minutes he was back, and this time he took his stand as though he meant to get through what he had come to do.

"Miss Eldridge," he said, and when I looked up, I saw that he had colored a little, "are you particularly busy this evening? I mean—have you any engagement?"

Now there was one thing upon which I had entirely resolved when I came to New York, and that was that there should never be, in my career, any of the restauranting-with-the-men-in-the-office which I had read about. My connection with the Meyer-Grimsons was going to cease each day at five o'clock. If I ever came to know any of them outside, well and good. But there was not to be any of the fluffy stenographer in mine, as Jimmie put it. At the same time, when Dirkman Fletcher stood there, inquiring about my evening, looking so straight and clean and manly and friendly, and when there flashed across me what the evening was likely to be in Mrs. Johnson's furniture-rag-bag of a room on Grove Street, my heart certainly gave a leap. However, I controlled my desire to say: "No, I have no engagement, and I'd simply love to do anything you want me to do in the line of mild entertainment," and said instead, very sedately:

"Yes, I have an engagement for this evening."

"Have you one—er—for to-morrow evening, too?" asked Mr. Dirkman Fletcher, looking more embarrassed.

"Yes, I have one for to-morrow evening, too," I replied, quite untruthfully, but feeling like a monument of virtue because I was refusing something I wanted to accept.

"How about next week?" demanded Mr. Fletcher. Heavens, but he is persistent, I thought.

"I'm afraid, Mr. Fletcher," I answered, concluding that I might as well let him know at once just what my attitude was to be, "that I am engaged for all the evenings as far ahead as I can see."

He stared at me as though he thought

I had gone crazy. He repeated my words in a dazed sort of way. Then he murmured that he was sorry, and turned to go away. At the door he suddenly swung back, a light of comprehension beginning to shine in his eyes.

"Oh, Miss Eldridge!" he exclaimed. "I think I understand. You supposed from my stupid way of putting my questions that I was going to try to persuade you to dine with me on too short and slight an acquaintance; is that it?"

"Why—why—weren't you?" I stammered like a fool.

"No, of course not," replied the young man, and I felt myself get hot and cold and stiff with rage at myself. Silly dolt that I had been! "Not until you know me better, and are sure that you desire me for a friend," he stumbled on, evidently in pity for my crimson face. "But this time—it is a shame I muffed it so! I only wanted you—I only wanted to ask you if you wouldn't—if you couldn't—if you would care to do a little extra evening work for a friend of mine—a young lady."

I wish I could write the words "a young lady" so that they would represent his voice uttering them. It was as though he were saying "a starry saint," "a tall white lily," or something of that sort. Somehow, I hated that girl on the spot, probably because I had just made such a bumptious goose of myself, declining invitations before they were offered! I wanted to say that my evenings were all too full for me to consider taking any more work, but New York does somehow make you want money in the greediest way. I feel that I simply must have a new winter suit, though in Chelsea I was well enough satisfied with my last year's coat and skirt.

So I swallowed my anger and my pride, and said that I should be very glad of some work to do in the evenings, and what was his friend's name and where should I find her? He said that her name was Flower—Miss June Flower—and that she lived at the Rensselaer, one of those small apartment



*As I was leaving, I noticed in the hall a little India-ink sketch of a house.*

hotels which the lone woman who can afford it seems to patronize in New York. I've come to the conclusion that some of the places must be as good as having a chaperon, living in them couples such respectability on lone females.

But June Flower! I felt sorry for any human being burdened with a name like that. I could just see in my mind's eye that sentimental young mother whose surname happened to be Flower, and whose Christian name was probably something plain and decent, like Jane or Mary Ann, rejoicing when she had a girl baby in June so that it

seemed appropriate to link those names together.

However, the young lady's name was none of my affair. I asked Mr. Fletcher what sort of work his friend wanted done—and I thought as I spoke that "June Fletcher" would be a better name than June Flower—and he replied that she was a writer, a poet, and that she wanted some literary work done.

"She is engaged on a dramatic work," Mr. Fletcher confided to me, evidently expecting to see me fall dead with admiring awe. I preserved a discreet silence. "It is in five acts and a prologue," he went on.

I could think of nothing to say except "Isn't that rather long for a modern play?" and he replied, as though I had accused his friend of something horribly common and vulgar:

"Oh, Miss Flower is not looking forward to a production of her play on the boards!"

Whereupon the imp that sometimes sits at my shoulder whispering impertinences into my ear prompted me to say:

"Ah, that resolution will probably save her a great deal of disappointment!"

But the blind man—and to think how keen he is in real estate deals!—said yes, that was true; that there were no modern actors or actresses whose performance of the parts would not be distressingly theatrical. Some day, after the stage had been elevated by some process not indicated, Miss June Flower might consent to see her five-act-and-a-prologue poetic drama produced.

Then we edged away from that subject, and he said he would make me an appointment with Miss Flower for that evening, and would let me know the hour.

He went into one of the sound-proof booths and talked for two or three calls' worth, and then came back to say that Miss Flower would be ready for me at eight o'clock that evening. And then he went off to Pleasantdell Heights, Long Island—twenty minutes from Herald Square as soon as the Pennsylvania tunnel is finished; cozy homes for three thousand dollars on terms to suit purchaser; churches, schools, sewers, electric lighting, and all modern conveniences—and put in as busy and alert a day, I've no doubt, as if he wasn't positively soft about the young lady "poic," as Jimmie used to call them when he was a little boy!

*November 4:* She is awfully pretty, that poetess, the pale, dark, languid sort. I don't believe she could walk a mile to save her neck!

*November 5:* I have just had the most peculiar experience to-day. I went out for lunch with a Mrs. Ben-

thorn, who is the chief clerk in the sales department. I have seen a good deal of her in the last week, and I have liked her very well. She is very quiet, quite old—thirty-six or seven, I should have said, though it turns out she's only thirty-two. She is exact in her work, so the chatterbox Hattie Lawlor tells me, and she is very reserved about her own affairs, which Hattie regards as "stuck up." However, I have liked Mrs. Benthorn very much, and haven't wanted to know anything about her affairs. But to-day I had to hear of them.

What makes women give way all at once, I wonder. You only have to look at this woman to know that she has had a great deal of trouble and sorrow; she is pale and worn and has put up a sort of armor of coldness against the world. To-day she looked uncommonly ill; there were heavy lines about her mouth and heavy circles under her eyes, and her skin was dull and lack-lustre. She didn't wear her old black dress quite so neatly as usual, and she was so nervous that she couldn't keep her fingers still even by interlocking them and holding them against the table edge in Daly's, where we go generally for lunch—one of those white-tiled, flapjacks-in-the-window places where the food is really pretty clean and decent, though the service is not exactly like that of the St. Regis.

I said something amiable about her health and began to study the bill of fare as though I didn't already know by heart the price of every variety of cereal, with milk or with milk-and-cream, of every sort of cracker, and of every sort of hash, with and without poached eggs. When I had just decided on a perfect revel of batter cakes and coffee, I looked up to ask her what she was going to have, and I found that she wasn't even looking at the bill of fare, but that the slow tears were running down her face, perfectly quietly. I begged her to tell me what the matter was, and if I could do anything, and by and by she recovered enough to say that she was ill and must go home.

It was evident that she was, too. So I told the waitress that my friend was ill, and she obligingly consented to tell the cashier near the door that we weren't trying to escape the payment of our lawful debts when we went by without placing a coin under her little cage, and we started. I telephoned the office that Mrs. Benthorn was suddenly taken ill, and that I was taking her home. I had asked for Mr. Fletcher to receive the message; I knew that he would not tell me to put her on a subway train and come back to my work, as Mr. Petersen might have done.

The poor soul has a little flat out "at the back of beyond"—as our old washerwoman used to say—really miles and miles uptown, in the hundred and forties. It's a tiny place and rather cheerless, though she is evidently used to better things, and there are one or two little reminders of a happier estate—a good rug, one or two engravings, an old-fashioned candelabrum, and the like.

The poor soul was nearly used up. I got her into the dark little bedroom and unfasted her clothes, and begged her to let me send for the doctor, but she refused. She said that she would be all right by and by, and she lay there with her heavy eyelids over her tired eyes, and her poor lips pale, and her breath coming and going with little gasps. I bathed her head and heated some water for her on the gas stove in the little kitchen—I don't know exactly why, except that hot water is always my panacea for human ills; heat is such a comforter!

Then I looked at the gimcracks on her bureau. They were plain enough for the most part, but in a beaten silver frame there was a picture of a young man whose face seemed in the most puzzling way familiar to me. Finally when she had somewhat recovered her self-control and her strength, I asked her whose the photograph was.

"My husband's," she answered.

I said "Oh" in the vacant way one says "Oh" when the existence of an undreamed-of person is baldly stated.

"It was taken ten years ago," said Mrs. Benthorn. "But it is like him."

"Is—er—Mr. Benthorn here, in New York?" I asked dully. "Ought not I to telephone him that you are at home, sick?"

She shook her head. And then she told me as if she were too utterly worn out to try to conceal anything any longer:

"I don't know where you would find him, Miss Eldridge. I—I—he was here last night after an absence of—months and months. It was the—pain—of that interview—that meeting—which has so upset me."

"Don't tell me about it unless you want to," I cried, trying to defend myself against hearing things I did not want to know.

"Oh, let me! Please let me! I'll die if I can't talk out. I'm so frozen with silence and concealment! Please let me tell you about it all. You have such a kind, sweet face, Miss Eldridge—such poise, such sense—"

I put my hand on the poor woman's silly lips, and told her to tell me anything that it would relieve her to share with another person. And she proceeded to do so, with many interruptions and tears and appeals.

It appears she was a Denver girl, of a well-to-do family. She had been brought up in ease and in a delightful, affectionate, free atmosphere. About ten years ago, Walter Benthorn, a young mining engineer, had come upon the scene, had fallen in love with her as she promptly did with him, had proposed and been joyously accepted. Everything was golden until one day her father told Helen—that was her name—that there was a mystery about her lover which the young man refused to clear; he would only declare that it was in no way a disgraceful one. This did not satisfy Helen's father, who declared that the engagement must be broken unless young Benthorn explained everything in his career. Benthorn refused; Helen would not give him up, believing in him utterly.

She broke with her family, eloped with Walter, and for five years they lived a life of idyllic happiness, marred only by her family's persistent refusal



to hold any communication with them. At the end of that period Walter had had an accident in a mine where he was making an examination. His injuries were not serious—there were some bruises about the head, a case of simple concussion of the brain, and in ten days he was declared well.

But he had never been the same again. From being a sufficiently sober man, he became addicted to drink. From being a truth teller, he became a liar. From being gay and humorous he became gloomy, morose, savage. From a loving husband he became an utterly cold and neglectful one. And finally from an honest man he became a petty embezzler. He lost his position with the mining company which employed him, and then one position after another. Helen, too proud to appeal to her family for the aid which she knew would be made conditional upon her giving up her husband, finally sold the contents of her home, came East, learned stenography, got employment, and eventually established the home in which I found her. At times her husband stayed with her; at times he disappeared.

"I never know when he will be brought home to me dead!" she cried, the poor, poor soul! "Killed in some drunken debauch, hurt in some brawl—Oh, I live in torment when he is away from me! And in torment when he is here. For—he seems to hate me, he tries to wring my heart! And he used to be the kindest—the most considerate—" She broke off sobbing.

It was an awful story to hear. I concluded that he had been only masquerading during his courtship and early married life, after a past which Helen's father had somehow learned to be as discreditable as this present turned out to be, and that finally, when his first love had cooled a little, the old viciousness reasserted itself.

And I was amazed to see that she still loved him, yearned over him, even, in some curious way, believed in him. His picture, with the clear-cut features,

the pleasant eyes, the slightly brooding forehead, was good to look at. But the sick woman on the bed, old and haggard before her time, spoke more eloquently of his real character, I thought.

As I was leaving, I noticed in the hall near the door a little India-ink sketch of a house standing on a slope that overlooked a curved inlet with boats clustered in it. The house was broad, spacious, old-fashioned—altogether delightful with its broad porches and its sheltering trees.

"What a pretty place!" I cried. And then, stupidly: "Is it your old home?"

"No," said Mrs. Benthorn, smiling a little whitely. "We haven't any Colonial houses or any bay in Denver. It's a little sketch my husband made—some place he knew, I suppose."

*November 7:* Mrs. Bleecker was moved to show me a portfolio of photographs this morning. It was Sunday, but she didn't feel like church. And I persuaded myself that it was more pious to stay at home and cheer her up than to go myself. There were all sorts of people and things in her funny, faded collection.

"There's Baylawns," she said, handing me one, and sighing as she always does when she mentions her home on Long Island. "Is it not lovely?"

It was a yellowed photograph of an old Colonial house, broad and spacious in the midst of its porches and trees. It stood on a slope that fell away to a graciously curved inlet, where the masts of a boat or two were discernible. For a minute I could not remember why it seemed so familiar to me. Then I recalled! I gasped!

"Are there any other places like that down there?" I asked her, with all sorts of crazy notions confusing me.

"Not so many as there used to be," she said, "but a good many." After all, I suppose the North Shore used to be thickly dotted with such places; but still I *knew* that this was the same I had seen the sketch of.

TO BE CONTINUED.



# UNCLE ABIMILECH ON THE PROFESSION OF THE FUTURE

By  
Dorothy Canfield



ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

FOR all Uncle Abimilech is so fat, he's not so awfully easy-going and good-natured as fat folks are supposed to be—he says writing best sellers is death on your nerves!—and mamma and we girls, sitting inside the parlor, looked sort of scared when we heard poppa outside on the veranda pitch into him hot and heavy for the advice uncle had given my brother Pete.

"Look-y-here, Ab!" shouted poppa. This was before we even knew Uncle Abimilech was in sight. I guess he had just turned into the path up to the veranda. "Look-y-here! I've always tried to do the square thing by you, if you did break away from decent Haskins traditions and take to being a novelist. I've brought my children up to respect you, and I've never allowed anybody in the family but myself to say what we all think about your profession. Now, what kind of a return do you call it to go touting off my only son in your track! Pete won't hear of anything but that he must be a novelist, like his uncle! Pete, the only soul who's going to carry the name of Haskins down to—a novelist! An author! Great Scott! If I'd thought that of him when he was little, I'd ha'——"

By this time I guess Uncle Abimilech had gotten up the veranda steps and over to where poppa sat, for we'd heard

his puffing and blowing, and then the chandelier began to jingle the way it always does when uncle walks around. We held our breaths and stopped our embroidery to listen what would happen next, and we heard uncle let himself down into a chair, kerplump! He always rattles the windows when he hits the seat, no matter how carefully he tries to do it. And he said, not a bit mad, just pitying and reasonable:

"Now, Peter, you keep your shirt on; and your coat and vest while you're about it, for you haven't got any kick coming, and you know it. Now you answer me a few questions as one Haskins to another. How old is Pete?"

"Twenty-six!" said poppa. You could hear him breathing hard.

"Did he ever make a cent in his life so far?"

"No, but——"

"Aw, eat your butts! You see what I'm driving at, don't you? How long had you been learning the silk business when you were twenty-six?"

"Eight years," said poppa, very short and grumpy.

"And Pete don't know any more about it now than you do about the difference between William Morris and Elbert Hubbard, and——"

"Hunh? Who're——" began poppa.

"Never mind! Never mind! Just a figure of speech. Nothing that Pete'll

have to bother with either. The point is that Pete'd never know anything about the silk business, or any other business, or anything else! What's the use of pretending he would? And instead of growling, you ought to be decorating my brows with a wreath of gold leaves, eighteen carat, for saving your business from what'd happen if Pete started in on it, *oughtn't* you now, Peter Haskins, senior?"

Poppa didn't say anything for a minute and then he mumbled:

"Well, there're some things that're worse'n others. Maybe Pete ain't so very bright, but I don't see that you gotta make a author outta him, if he ain't."

"Now that's more like it," said uncle. "Now you've stopped foaming at the mouth I will admit that I owe you a sort of explanation, and that you're not to blame for being a little leary of the scheme. You see, you haven't paid enough attention to the

author business to see how it's changed since your young days. It's not the same at all, any more than the steel industry is. I confess frankly that I personally probably made a great mistake when I took up that trade, for with the Haskins business ability and acumen applied to the opportunities that have existed in trade during the last quarter of a century, I might have been a multi-millionaire instead of just

comfortably up in the hundred thousands. But nowadays! And *Pete!* The hand of Providence points him to the career of letters. In the first place you've just admitted that there's no other business he's good for, and in the second you take my expert advice on it that he's cut out and sewed together expressly to fit the modern profession of literature! With you and

me back of him to look after the advertisement, business management, etc., and Pete's natural, Heaven-sent inability to conceive an idea above the level of the public that thirsts for best sellers—why, Peter, I won't put any limit to what that boy'll do! He may be loaning you money yet!"

"Hunh! *Likely!*" grunted poppa, but you could hear that he was impressed a lot. "But look here, Ab, hang it all, how can I help in the writing business? Take advertising. I know when it

pays to put a full-page ad about silk in any one of the trade journals; but I don't even know the names of the trade journals in this new business of Pete's, let alone what they charge per page."

Uncle Abimilech settled back. You could hear the chair creak.

"Peter, you're right. You don't know anything about the author business, but right here and now you're going to



*They didn't know we were inside, listening to them.*

learn. Listen! Every newspaper and every magazine in any language in the world is a trade journal for Pete, and the ads don't cost a cent."

We heard poppa jump in his chair and "Hunh? Whatchu mean?" he said.

Uncle went on in that smooth, quick way he has when he wants to head you off.

"Take my case. I never paid a cent for advertisement in my life and yet I doubt if Punk's Pure Pickles or Scrub-bine Soap are better known names than A. H. Haskins. And is it due to the beautiful artistic qualities of my books? I tell you with honest pride that it is not, for I think I am not boasting when I say that never in my life have I signed my name to anything with the least pretension to literature. It's due to sound business methods. That's *what!* Take a concrete example. When I was young and just starting in and needed a big boost, you may remember that I undertook to sail in a fishing dory from Maine to the Bermudas and——"

"I guess I do remember," put in poppa, very mad, "and a bigger fool thing I never heard of! Didn't I lose a solid week out of business when your dotty old eggshell floated in, keel up, to the harbor at——"

"Yes, and you may also remember another thing," interrupted uncle. "That after your week of agonized cablegraphs and telegrams, and after all the papers in the country had joined in, giving my picture and a synopsis of the two books I'd written up to that time, and an account of my family and past hist'ry and brilliant prospects, and every day a different version of where my dead body had been found, after all that, I was discovered, landed comfortably in a hacienda on the coast of Cuba, quite unaware of the hullabullo about my boat, which had broken away from her moorings one night after we'd all been to a picnic and got a little too uplifted to know a knot in a rope from a nest of vipers."

"Yup!" said poppa, "and it makes me black in the face yet to think of all the good money I wasted in——"

We gathered from the scraping sound that Uncle Abimilech was hitching his chair up to poppa's, and now he put in very quiet:

"Peter, the circulation of 'Priscilla Everett, Puritan Maiden,' before that trip had been just four hundred and twenty-three copies, most of them given away to reviewers. In the three weeks after I was discovered, the advance orders for new editions amounted to two hundred and fifty thousand. And it cost me"—he sank his voice low and solemn as though he were in church—"it cost me just the hire of the little steam yacht that took me to Cuba and towed the open boat across to the harbor where it was found, keel——"

Poppa broke in, his voice keyed way up, "Abimilech Haskins! You don't mean it!"

"I do," said uncle.

We heard poppa hopping around in his chair, and he said quick and short: "And the time your twins were lost in the woods and——"

"Yup," said Uncle Abimilech. "That sold five hundred thousand of 'Re-united.'"

"And when you took up the case of the hunters who'd been shut out of the forests on that big steel magnate's estate up in the Adirondacks?"

"Unh-hunh!" said uncle. "That was when 'John Allison, Son of the People' was just out. When that got through selling I had fifty thousand to invest in U. S. Steel bonds."

"Good Lord!" said poppa.

For a minute they didn't say anything more. When poppa spoke again, his voice sounded so tired!

"And I have to give up ten thousand for a single insertion of a page ad in the *American Woman's Friend!*"

"Well," said Uncle Abimilech, overflowing the edges of his chair, "now maybe you think I know what I'm talking about!"

"But why under the sun does that make any dif——" began poppa.

"Nobody *knows* why! It's just so. Folks won't buy an inch more of your silk, not if you were to be flayed alive



*"Whatchu drivin' at anyhow? Cut out the fancy figures. What's the matter?"*

or married four times in one day; but they will buy more, millions more of your books. It's a fact, just as much as that the big department store has

come to stay. And let me tell you, it's a fact that's in favor of the author's bank account all right, all right, all right!"

"It's perfectly abominable," poppa burst out, pounding on the arm of his chair. "The way the world is run is certainly something sickening!"

"Not at all," said Uncle Abimilech. "Not in the least, if you'll only look to see which way it is running before you start in on your own particular footrace. If you go along in the same direction you hardly have to wiggle a toe to cover sixty miles an hour. You get swept along by the current and you don't have to pay a cent for the trip, either."

"But now about Pete?" said poppa dubiously. "Pete don't know enough to——"

"That, my dear brother, is the great advantage of Pete. You and I put him into the swim, and head him the right way. He'll never so much as dream of turning around and going against the current. In other words, you show Pete a best seller—whatever the latest style happens to be, colonial, psychological, historical, romantic or socialistic—and tell him to copy it. Will he have to resist any temptations to put in ideas of his own? Not if I know Pete! Will he itch to mix his brands and make his romantic hero human, or his psychological hero do something besides pay afternoon calls and talk about early Venetian architecture? You know he won't! Will he have any depraved desire to show that his heroine was not peerlessly lovely even when she had a cold in her head or had lost her temper? Not Pete! And why won't he? Because—oh, lucky father!—because, *no more than any of his readers*, will he think of his heroine as like a real woman or like anything else out of a best selling novel. When I think that such capacity might have been lost to American literature if I hadn't——"

"I suppose," said poppa practically, cutting uncle short in his flow of language, "I suppose he'll start in by writing short stories and work up to a novel later."

"He will *not*!" shouted Uncle Abimilech, and you could hear by his tone he was hot all through, and he kept getting hotter and hotter as he talked.

"He will not, as long as my name is Abimilech Hezekiah! I made that mistake and I want to save the second generation from all the time I wasted. No, sir, to write short stories when you might be writing novels is like selling a single brass spoon when you might be operating in copper on the Street to the tune of millions. You get your little ten-cent piece for the spoon all right, if anybody you meet happens to want a spoon and to like 'em made of brass, and to be out of spoons at the time, and not to prefer to buy them of his brother-in-law who's in the spoon business, too, and if he likes the shape of yours, and happens to want a teaspoon and not a table-spoon, and don't think you ought to be making rubber boots instead of spoons and——"

"Slow up, Ab," said poppa. "You'll burst a blood vessel. Whatchu drivin' at anyhow? Cut out the fancy figures. What's the matter?"

We could hear uncle snort and gurgle and catch his breath. "To be entirely lucid, I mean magazine editors, and if you only knew it, when I've said that, I've said all and more than the mails will carry. You send one of them a problem-psychological story, written with your heart's blood and embodying all the knowledge of human life you've been able to attain. He answers that *his* magazine is looking for your *good* work, not your pot-boilers. You send to another a sugar-and-white-of-egg love story. He replies that it is too cynical and morbid to put in a family magazine. You write a whooping, slap-dash adventure tale—'Come on, boys! Bang! Bang! Hurrah!'—and are told that 'it is quite over the heads of our readers.' You write a—— But what's the use of going on? I could, out of my own history, extract enough harrowing examples to last an entire day."

"Good Lord!" said poppa.

Uncle Abimilech laughed. "But I won't. I will just add that when somebody finally accepts and prints a story that's been going around till it's ready to drop to pieces, *then* all the editors who had it years before, and lost it

seven or eight months in the back of a drawer, and finally returned it, saying that of course you couldn't have thought seriously that that was their kind of a story—then, I say, they all write you and say: 'We note your story in So-and-So's Magazine. Now why don't you ever send us anything like that? *That's* what we're looking for!'

Uncle was puffing as he talked, and though I couldn't see him I knew just how his eyes were popping out, the way they do when he's going to wind up with something awfully literary in his talk.

"No, sir!" he said to poppa. "No, sir-ee! No supercilious, college-educated, thin-blooded magazine editors in mine, to stand between me and the heart of the plain people. Give me a

publishing house with no nonsense about it, that's not in business for its health or to Harvardize the public, that'll give me free access to the great American public, and you see what I've been able to do. Henry James may have slain his thousands, but I have slain my two hundred and fifty thousands! Aye, with the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps have I slain."

"Sounds as though I'd heard that before," said poppa.

Uncle Abimilech pulled himself up to go.

"Sure you have," he said. "Likely you knew it all before. I didn't invent any of this I been telling you about. It's been so since the beginning of time. All I've done was to have sense enough to *see* it!"



### The Time I Rowed the Boat

THE last time when 'twus holiday,  
Pa took me in a boat;  
We rowed an' rowed, far, far away,  
An' then we let it float  
Along the bank beneath the trees  
That bowed and nodded in the breeze,  
And seemed to say: "Hello, there, boy!  
You, boy, down in the boat!"

My pa, he let me take the oars  
An' see if I could row;  
Now that's hard work, you'd better b'leeve,  
You try it once; you'll know!  
It seemed like water's everywhere!  
I got all soaked up to my hair!  
But pa, he laughed an' didn't care,  
When I tried to row the boat.

Ma wus cross w'en we got home,  
'Cause I wus all wet through;  
But I guess that women folks don't know  
W'at boys an' men can do!  
If she'd been there she'd been afraid,  
W'en she seen all the splash I made;  
Pa said I 'most broke the oar-blade,  
The time I rowed the boat!

GEORGE REDFIELD CLARKE.





ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

A NEWLY born board of trade, like a newly hatched chicken, begins promptly to scratch gravel. The Newry board of trade at its first banquet in Odd Fellows' Hall—turkey and fixin's and ice cream—kicked the air full of enthusiasm.

First Selectman Thelismar Doane, called upon to respond to the sentiment, "Our Fair Municipality," set the ball rolling; he suggested that the new board of trade show that it had not organized merely to eat turkey and make speeches, but to put the thrill of life along the keel of Newry. And he knew the way to do it, he said. Celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of Newry, the shire town of Cuxabexis County. Throw the place wide open. Invite everybody to come. Give 'em a show to make their hair curl. Get outside capitalists into the place and entertain 'em till their heads were spinning. That's the way to talk it! That's the way to do it! Wide open—red fire—a hot show—hoorah—and all hands round, high Betty Martin!

While the members were cheering, Old Man Price arose and stood gazing

rebukingly on them until the clamor ceased.

"I want to call your attention, gents," he said, "to the fact that you can't celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of a town till the town is one hundred years old. This town was founded eighty-five—"

"Aw, go write that in your history," yelled an irreverent member.

This remark got a laugh that set Old Man Price down, for it was generally known that he had been at work thirty years on a history of Newry and had finished only three chapters.

First Selectman Doane popped up.

"You get an illustration right there of one of the troubles in this place," he declared hotly. "Let enterprising, go-ahead men start to do something, and some old snail sticks up his horns and slimes the track. I, for one, don't giveadam if Newry ain't but ten years old—she's been actin' lately as though she was two thousand and had one foot in the grave. You business men of our streets that I see sittin' here before me—don't you want to reap a harvest? We need to get up something that's

goin' to attract trade into this place. I want to see these streets packed from the county buildings to the fair grounds. But you've got to have attractions to do it, if you want 'em to come and leave money here. You've got to get the carnival spirit into 'em, if you want 'em to loosen. It'll have to be the show that we put up for 'em that will do it. A show that we can advertise so's to get 'em in here; a show that—when they're once here—will make 'em so dizzy that they won't stop to count their money. It can be done, and I see before me the man that can do it—the show part, I mean. He knows the game. He knows the right people to get. I'm goin' to let order of business go to thunder, and nominate here and now for high, grand manager of the show part of the celebration, one of Newry's adopted sons, who is sittin' there beside his friend, High Sheriff Sproul, the Honer'ble Hiram Look, expropriator of Look's Leviathan Circus. I call for three cheers for Honer'ble Look."

The howl that arose left no doubt as to the unanimity of the members.

"I ain't any kind of a speechmaker," stated Hiram, rising to accept. "I can only say that I know the show game from peanuts to parachutes, and if you order a hot show, then it's a hot show you get. And I want to say here and now that a pome, a prayer, a paper on progress, and the schoolchildren singin' the 'Star Spangled Banner' in betweenwhiles ain't my idea of a celebration that brings money into a place. I don't want to brag, but I'll guarantee to make one hand wash the other; I'll sell privileges enough to pay for the real attractions. Get your porrin'gers ready, gents, because when the money begins to drop it will come fast. Time hangs kind of heavy since I've retired, and I'll be glad to get back into the game again for a little while. That's all—and thankin' you kindly for the compliment."

After that much of inspiring progress it was the work of only a few jubilant moments to appoint general committees, and the banqueters went home.

Hiram Look strolled up to the county buildings, enjoying his cigar. Cap'n Sproul trudged beside him without word of comment when Hiram unfolded certain rosy schemes that already occurred to him.

"Why in hookydemus don't ye say something?" demanded the old showman at last. "What do you think of it, anyway?"

The sheriff replied with alacrity and decision.

"I think I've been 'tendin' out on a picaroon feed, and that now I'm walkin' home with the old Cap Kidd of the outfit. The whole talk I've heard is how to get people in here and skin 'em out of their money."

"That's nice talk to make about your best friend and an enterprising town," retorted Hiram indignantly.

"Can't help how it sounds to *you*," said the cap'n. "That's the way it looks to *me*. Get 'em and skin 'em—that was the whole gist of the meetin'. All is, I serve warnin' on you now that as high sheriff of this county I shan't stand by and see anybody skinned—board of trade or no board of trade."

"Aaron," choked Hiram, after a pause, during which he struggled with his emotions, "there are things about you I like, but when you talk to me the same as you do now, I can't remember 'em. All I can say is, if goin' to sea puts that kind of a streak into a man, it ain't right for him to come ashore to live among sensible people."

Cap'n Sproul was equally frank in his rejoinder.

"Hiram, take you outside of the business you've followed through life, and you're as honest as the average run of men, and I relish bein' with you. I don't think, as man to man, you'd take a dollar that didn't belong to you. But get that showman streak in you once uncovered, and you're about as near total depravity—without realizin' it—as anything this side of Tophet. You'll recollect that I've seen you operate a few times. And the last time you operated and dragged me into it, it was distinctly understood that you wasn't goin' to do it again. Now at

your time of life, and with as much money as you have got in the bank, you'd better leave off circussin'. Otherwise, if you sail the course you're headin', accordin' to what you've told me, you, as head pirate of this show you're plannin', and me, as high sheriff of this county, is apt to bump in a way that will carry away more or less top-hamper. I warn ye, that's all."

Hiram swore and threw his cigar from him. It skated ahead down the sidewalk, leaving a trail of sparks along which the old showman stamped wrathfully, entered the sheriff's residence ahead, and disappeared into the room that he occupied as the cap'n's crony.

After that the preparations for the "Grand Centennial Celebration of Newry and Gorgeous Street Fair" went on apace; and no further word of conference passed between the two. In answer to advertisements that Hiram inserted in certain sporting papers of the metropolis, men appeared in Newry and consulted with him in his room at the county buildings.

Cap'n Sproul saw them arrive and depart, and displayed a visage that indicated his doubts and his disgust. They were men who twisted their mustaches with a flirt, and cocked their little fingers airily when they tapped the ashes off gilt-banded cigars. They exhaled that indefinable emanation of trickery that sets the repugnance of an honest man to bristling. And when Hiram's perspicacity had fully noted certain signs and portents that threatened his plans, he set a delegation from the board of trade on his friend.

The interview was not satisfactory. Board of trade emissaries pleaded that once in a while men and municipalities needed to "loosen" a bit, and that Newry needed the money, and that a little carnival spirit wouldn't hurt any one. Of course there would be some things on the programme that wouldn't go very well inside the gates of a camp meeting—but this wasn't to be any camp meeting. They argued that authority ought to shut one eye and let the old town get busy and breezy for once in its history.

The sheriff was noncommittal, but the glint in his hard gray eyes chilled their souls and sent them back to Hiram in dismay.

And that was on the very eve of the great event. Banners floated at their staffs, the fronts of buildings were wreathed in bunting, and the booths and tents and kiosks, all the gay parade of the ballyhoo, and the schemes of the fakirs were ready for the confiding people.

"Mr. Look," stated the spokesman of the emissaries, "you've got to handle your own friend. He won't listen to us. He's sitting there like a bulldog guarding a soup bone, and he won't even growl loud enough so as to tell what he's thinking about. But he ain't thinking any good for this show. We all know that if it wasn't for you he never would have got to be high sheriff of this county. It will be a curious case if you can't handle him."

There was rebuke as well as wonder in the tone—and a bit of sly contempt, in addition—and Hiram's soul flamed. He went up alone to the seat of authority, shut all doors, cornered the sheriff behind his desk, and pulled a chair close—so close that their knees touched.

"Aaron," said he, "I've been and got up a show for this town. It suits me. It's goin' to suit the people. I've catered to the people all my life and I know what *they* want. Now *I* want an understandin' with *you*. Do you say that show don't suit you?"

"I ain't sayin' anything. I ain't seen it."

"But what do you think?"

"Judgin' from the style of fellows I've seen you dickerin' with and that's been paradin' these streets the last day or two, this town and them have gone into a pirate pardnership that can't be matched this side the Malay Sea. You ask me a plain question and you get a straight answer."

"What's your idea of a show to suit the people, eh?"

"I ain't in the show business, and I never have been, and never shall be."

The tone in which that was said reflected on Hiram's profession.



*"I ain't any kind of a speechmaker. I can only say that I know the show game from peanuts to parachutes."*

"Let me tell you, then, what your idea of entertainment would be," declared the old showman. "In one tent there would be a swearin' match between a couple of old sloshes of salt water called cap'ns; in another tent would be an old tarheel knockin' down Portygee sailors with a belayin' pin, and then dancin' a sailor's hornpipe. And for a free show you'd have a knittin' match, six old maids on a side, and a custard-pie eatin' contest for the Sunday school children. Yes, sir! Them's

about your ideas. And here you are proposin' to bust up the plans of a man that knows something about the game."

"Yes, mebbe my idee's differ from yourn regardin' shows," replied the cap'n dryly. "And prob'ly my idee's never will get shifted round enough so that I will stand on one foot and see the people of this county come in here and be gouged right and left under the name of a board of trade carnival. Steer your show square and I won't

come acrost your bows. But the minute you run up the black flag you'd better stand by to repel boarders."

Hiram stared at him for a time.

"And you call yourself a friend of mine!" he blurted at last.

"I do," replied the cap'n serenely, "and I allus shall, except when you're sufferin' from a circus spell. And then I shall treat you like I would handle any poor, unfortunate lunatic."

The situation was too intense; Hiram kicked over his chair and stamped out of the office.

He went along the line of tents and booths and collected by word of summons such of the fakirs and showmen as he came across. They assembled in the tent of the "Nautch Houris."

"You've got to tone down your shows, boys," he informed them. "By all good rights I ought to be able to handle the old split codfish that's high sheriff of this county, but I've found out that I can't do it—and that's no fault of mine. He simply can't be touched. I've got the deputies all fixed, and what's done he'll have to do himself. But I tell you, boys, he's quite a hand to do when he gets started."

"The first frame-up was that we should have a wide-open town and the key thrown away," stated one of the listeners sullenly. "We paid for our privileges on that basis. Now, for one, I don't stand for the hopples."

There was a mumbled chorus from those who subscribed to that sentiment. Hiram knew his own ilk too well to be dismayed, but he understood that the occasion called for diplomacy.

"Use common sense, boys," he exhorted. "I'll admit that the frame-up isn't what I thought it was goin' to be. But the fellow that's ditched now after this warnin' will have only himself to blame, and I want it understood now that there's not goin' to be any discount of privilege money or any rebates. When a man with a gold badge, and a roll to his gait, and a lambrequin under his chin comes along, have the girls sing: 'Where is my wanderin' boy to-night?' Let every sucker win his money at whatever game he's playin', sell

things straight, and charge only ten cents a crack for the phrenology game. There's your tip. It's up to you whether you keep on doin' business."

He left them, for further conversation was not profitable just then, and they did not present the amiable front that one desires in companions.

At nine o'clock that evening Hiram and the general committee of the board of trade completed a conference that did not shed any rosy light on the situation.

"All is," stated Hiram at the conclusion of the gloomy confab, "seein' that we can't go as far as we like, we'll have to put on brakes and go as far as we can. Mebbe we can fool him. He knows more about reeфин' the hind jibboom, or whatever they do 'boardship, than he does about the show business. We'll rinky-dink him just as far as we're able to. I've given out the word to the mice; the cat can't watch the whole of 'em at once. But it ain't what I'd reckoned on, and it ain't what I'd promised the boys. The town ain't goin' to be wide open, and that takes the edge off'm the whole fun."

He lighted a cigar and walked down the length of the carnival-arrayed street. All was ready for the grand opening of the morrow, but the buoyancy seemed to have gone out of things. The fakirs scowled at him from the doors of their booths, and in tents little groups growled away disconsolately.

"I wish he was in hackenny hitched to a post," pondered the old showman wrathfully. "I've had a feelin' in my life before that I'd like to jump down a man's throat and gallop the eternal stuffin' out of him; but I don't know as I was ever feelin' more like doin' it than I am this minute. Men that go to sea must get queer notions into 'em, that's all I can say. There ain't any more sportin' blood in him, nor notion of what people want, than there is in a dead hake."

The approach of "Pea" Driscoll at that moment was fortuitous, but in consideration of the old showman's state of mind was happily so.

"I listened to what you said in the



tent a while ago," stated Mr. Driscoll disconsolately, "and it looks to me as though we shell-game fellows was pickled good and enough for this meet. Ain't we got any protection at all?"

"You're protected from everything except the weather and the sheriff of this county—and I'm puttin' lightnin' and Cap Sproul in the same class. You've got to take your chances."

Mr. Driscoll fingered his watch chain and scowled moodily at the stars.

"I've been chasin' myself around among the boys," he said at last, "and we're all agreed that something has got to be done. And there's only one man to be done."

"You hold on, right there," exploded Hiram. "He ain't usin' us liberal, and he's a balky old rhinoceros, but we don't propose to have the sheriff of this county sandbagged and have it done under the auspices of the board of trade. You go slow, or I'll have you all under bonds."

"There's no sandbaggin' thought of," insisted Mr. Driscoll. "Don't you suppose I know that side-trackin' a sheriff means a frilled and fancy job? Now, boss, your town is lookin' for twenty-four hours of free and easy. The show is ready, and the wide-eyed are goin' to be disappointed if they don't have a chance to buy a few high-colored pictures when they strike the place. No bluff goes between you and me. You and me knows the high sign of the profesh, eh?"

Hiram grunted assent.

"Nobody's goin' to get hurt. That's understood, see? But I've got a hen on an egg that looks good to me. Now, boss, between you and me, as I've said, what's it goin' to be worth to your board of trade to have the sheriff so busy about something else for the main merry-go-round time of the show that he won't be mussin' into what ain't really his business? I mean that he stays away, and come's back without any halter in his hand for any one. Ain't goin' to be hurt, nor gagged, nor tied to a stake—but is comin' back perfectly willin' to shut up and stay shut. It's worth a hundred dollars, ain't it?"

"I don't like the sound of it," protested Hiram.

"Now, look here," said Mr. Driscoll, with vigor, "none of you around here is goin' to bluff me. When this idea came to me I circled among the boys first. They want a clear field and they're ready to chip for it. You and your board of trade want a clear field. I've been right up to your big noise in that combination and made him own up. If you'll drip for a hundred I'll pull off the trick—and no skin ruffed up. I'll get two hundred more out of the boys. Speak quick, because there's some plannin' to do."

"It'll be a clear quill job, eh?" stammered Hiram, divided between his showman's longings and his loyalty to a friend.

"Guaranteed—or no pay. Money to be deposited for me till the job's pulled off. I tell you, Boss Look, this is where the ring goes over the main cane in the bunch if you say the word."

"You go ahead," instructed Hiram after a pause. "It ain't my regular style of treatin' a friend, but I reckon I'm playin' it the same as he is; he's cut the cards for the deal, and friendship has ceased."

At dawn the next morning the boom of the big guns announced that Newry was off into her carnival, galloping merrily. There were plenty of people to witness the send-off. The streets were packed with early arrivals. By the middle of the forenoon the big show was in full swing. At that hour Hiram went the rounds and reassured his clients.

"I reckon," he said, "that the cap's bark was worse than his bite. I figger he's gettin' to be a shrewder politician than I'd estimated. Havin' given off his orders, the cuss is taken off'm him if anything happens. I reckon you'd best loosen up, boys. He's stickin' to the jail and 'tendin' to his business."

That statement was correct. Cap'n Sproul did not propose to make a ramrod reformer out of himself. The idea of running downtown at daybreak and scouting about the peep shows was distasteful to him, and he shrewdly real-



ized that he would be a marked man and would find very little evil visible. He remained in his office, looked after the usual routine of his day, and waited for what he knew would happen, for he had keen understanding of the nature of a part of Newry's populace. He saw the delegation when, a sombre blotch against the holiday pageantry, it threaded out from among the tents in the street and advanced on the jail. He sat down at his desk and waited expectantly.

Old Man Price led the way. He was flanked by two deacons and several women of the type that Cap'n Sproul termed 'no' easters," followed in their wake.

"Mr. Sheriff," said Old Man Price, opening the conference, "you know that I have objected from the start to any such celebration as Newry is having. It can't be a centennial when the town is only——"

"That isn't the question," broke in one of the deacons, whose tone showed that he already had a familiarity with Old Man Price's arguments that amounted to contempt. "It ain't whether this town is one year old or one thousand years old. Sodom and Gomorrah was old enough to know better. And I want to tell you, Mr. Sheriff, that them old towns in their wust days never acted out so bad as Newry is actin' out to-day—and the Scripture doesn't mention that they had boards of trade, either! I call on you to do your duty as an officer—and if you don't this town is spoken for. Rain o' fire will descend on us just as sure as butter will spile in Tophet."

"We ain't takin' hear-so," added the second deacon. "We've took in every show. We're givin' you the testimony of eyes and ears. The scarlet woman is kickin' and prancin' down there. There's three tents of her. And one of 'em kicked my hat out of my hands."

"We saw it done," averred the other deacon, and the women nodded indignant assent.

"They took five dollars of my money in a game where they draw envelopes out of a box," stated Old Man Price.

"And the feller that drawed ahead of me got twenty dollars."

"But he belonged to the show," said one of the women, "for I watched sharp and saw him give it back to the man."

"There's just one thing down there that looks to be honest," stated Mr. Price, "and that's the balloon that they've got ready to go up. And even that has got a big name painted across it, 'The Buzzard.' They're all buzzards and hawks, seekin' whom they may devour, and we as a committee call on you to do your duty as sheriff."

"You reckon, don't you, that I know what my duty is?" inquired the cap'n tartly.

"Why ain't you 'tendin' to it, then?" demanded one of the deacons. "Here I've been done out of ten dollars, playin' one of their dratted gamblin' games."

"Havin' finished up other matters, I'm just ready to attend to my duty," replied Cap'n Sproul, stamping out from behind his desk. "The first thing I'll attend to will be to arrest you for gamblin'. The whole of you come along down to Judge Knowlton's office. You've got to recognize as witnesses."

He grabbed the deacon's arm and hustled him along.

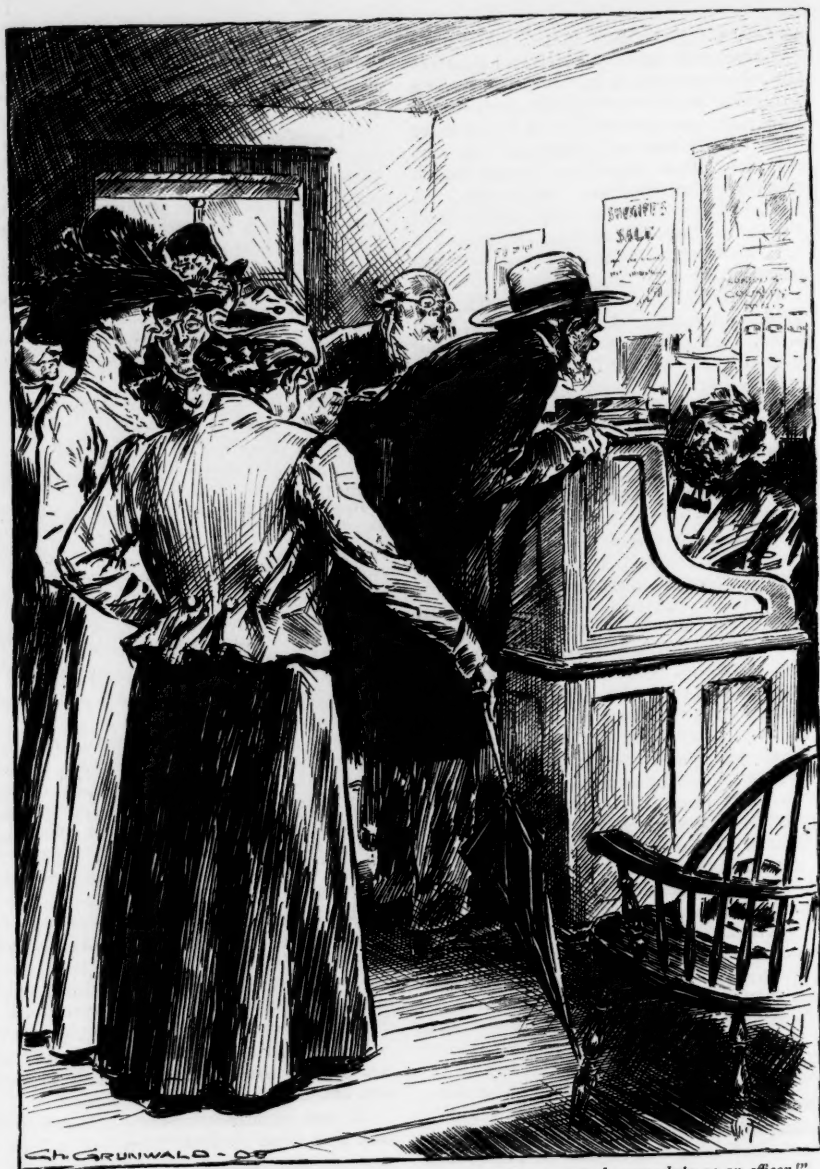
"You can't set in the main rigg'in' and squawk to me more'n twice about duty without something droppin' down your throat," the sheriff continued, making for the door with his prisoner and shoos the others along ahead of him. "This is the start of a general clean-up in this town."

"I withdraw all charges," stammered the deacon. "I guess it hadn't better go any further."

"Don't you try to compound any felonies, nor bribe me or interfere with my duty," the cap'n barked at him.

He rushed his prisoner out upon the street and toward the justice's office, and the others followed, cowed.

"If you see any more duty layin' round that I'm missin', just point it out," remarked the sheriff cheerfully, as he yanked the choking deacon along. "You've got quite an eye for duty, and



*"I call on you to do your duty as an officer!"*

there's nothin' I enjoy 'tendin' to so much."

The big balloon, sucking at its gas tanks, was rounding in the air above the village square. The deacon eyed it and turned venomous gaze on his captor.

"I wish you was tied into it flat on your back and was sailin' away to Jericho," he gritted.

"I'd relish the trip, but I reckon I'd better sacrifice my hankerin's and stay here and 'tend to that duty you've been remindin' me of," replied the sheriff serenely.

The formalities of the justice's office were quickly attended to, and the wrathful deacon found himself at large under bonds on a gambling charge. His companions, no less indignant, were held as witnesses. Cap'n Sproul salied forth to continue his work of reformation.

Hiram Look was on the sidewalk at the street door, apparently waiting for him.

"Take a tour through with me," he invited cordially. "I want to show you that this thing is runnin' in a strickly moral way."

"Hiram," the sheriff declared, "generally speakin' you're a pleasant companion, and I ain't denyin' that just now you could probably give me a trip around this place that would be as instructive as readin' the dictionary and as moral as a pome by the sweet singer of Belgrade. But I want you to understand that I'm makin' this trip without blinders. You keep on your way representin' the Newry board of trade, and I'll blunder round representin' the sheriff's office." He walked off, straight into the holiday press.

Hiram looked after his friend, chewing his cigar.

"Blast ye!" he growled. "I had softened up and was goin' to save ye from the plot, whatever it is they've rigged, but after this last hout of yourn you go on ahead to damnation, if you're bound to."

The sheriff made his first tour of tents and booths a preliminary one, eying conditions shrewdly but not undertaking to interfere. He did not

notice that a man kept behind him, tossing alert signals to barkers and managers and winking crafty warnings. This individual was the same man who had conferred with Hiram the night before; it was Pea Driscoll, with his three-shell board tightly buttoned under his coat.

Cap'n Sproul made interested halt at the balloon, tethered in the village square.

It was not merely a "hot-air elevator" with parachute; it was a monster balloon of the gas type, and Hiram considered that securing it was one of his chief strokes as showman of the occasion. His plan was to have it go up early on the first day and make an advertising flight of length, dropping handbills all over the surrounding country, calling in people for the second and the big day. The "professor," a hard-faced young man, was running about, squinting at the swell of the silk bag and exhorting his volunteer human anchors to "stand steady and hold hard." When he spied Driscoll he ran over to him and growled, sotto voce: "Where's your man? I can't hold this balloon five minutes longer even for that hundred!"

"S-s-s-sh!" hissed Mr. Driscoll. "He's here. The stubby one over there peekin' at the gas machine. I was reckonin' he'd be toled out sooner 'n this."

"Deliver him, and deliver him quick," commanded the professor. "That part is all up to you. I'm goin' to have worries of my own, makin' a getaway out of this square with this wind a-blowin' harder all the time."

The Buzzard was swaying wildly as the wind gusts struck her. Her pilot gave a last glance aloft, disconnected the gas pipes, and climbed the rope ladder that led to the basket.

"Stand by for the word!" he called to his volunteers who were clinging to the ropes.

At that moment Pea Driscoll unbuttoned his coat and let down his little board.

"She ain't goin' away till the wind quiets, boys," he shouted. "Now that

you're here, make money while you wait. It will take only a minute to clean up your expenses for the day. Don't waste your time. Minutes mean money. The balloon ain't ready to start yet, but the little shell has started. Ten or a twenty to the good boy that watches the little pea. It's so easy it's foolish."

He had the cap'n's flaming eye on him by that time.

"Come on, uncle," he cried.

"You bet I'll come on," roared Cap'n Sproul, making at him.

A howl of laughter came up from the crowd that pressed about the square reserved for the balloon.

"You've tried to bunco the high sheriff," yelled a jubilant spectator.

"The high sheriff!" gasped Mr. Driscoll, ducking away, and feigning amazement and fright most excellently. He ran around and around the walls of humanity, but no one retreated to give him egress from the square. The bystanders were too interested. The sheriff pounded at his heels, calling at him that he was under arrest.

Suddenly Mr. Driscoll seemed to see his only opportunity. He leaped to the rope ladder and ran up and dropped over into the basket of the balloon.

"I hain't climbed ratlin's for thutty years to be bothered by anything like that," cried the sheriff, answering a taunt from the crowd, and up he swarmed.

But as he threw his leg over the basket's edge, Mr. Driscoll dropped like a cat from the other side, and both he and the professor yelled: "Let 'er go!" with such terrific intensity that half of the human anchors jumped and released their clutch on the ropes.

"Let go, let go!" insisted Mr. Driscoll, running around wildly and cuffing at their hands.

The balloon shot up ten feet, and then the crowd checked it again, for the furious face of the sheriff threatened them over the edge of the basket. They did not understand. He put his leg over as though to leap even that distance. The wind seized the big bag and tilted

it, and it drew its struggling holders down the street, overturning booths and tents.

"Down killick!" roared Cap'n Sproul, his seaman's instincts returning. He tossed out the anchor, striking away the professor when he sought to prevent the action.

"Out from under!" roared voices in the crowd, and the men ducked and released the ropes. But the anchor had become entangled in tents, as the balloon swept up the street, driven by the wind. The Buzzard did not shoot up, but, weighted, tore along down the street, dragging wreck and ruin behind it. The professor had only one free hand to work with, for he had to cling to the rigging to keep from falling out of the basket. The cap'n devoted both hands to holding on. A hatchet was stuck with other tools in a loop inside the basket. The professor made a clutch for it, secured it, and slashed away the anchor rope.

They swung over the near buildings, just missed the tall chimneys of the county buildings, raked a tree or two and rose into the air, scaling down the heavens with the speed of a railroad train.

After the first horror of that amazing send-off, the equanimity of Cap'n Sproul promptly returned to him. Lofty altitudes could not dizzy his mariner's head. He gazed back. The shouts in the street of Newry came up to him plainly. He saw persons kicking their way out from under prostrate canvas. Nearly every one who was released stood up and shook his fists after the fleeing Buzzard. Those who shook longest and hardest were the show owners, so the cap'n pondered. And when the figures were too small to be interesting any longer, he turned his gaze on the professor who was busy readjusting lines and rigging that their tempestuous mode of getting away had disarranged.

"A nice, handy balloonist you'd make," snarled the professor. "Throw-in' over an anchor on full inflation! What did you think you was aboard of, anyhow—a mud scow? And what are



*"I want to tell you now that when we do light, you'll land underneath with my grip on ye!"*

you doin' aboard here, anyway?" It had been talked over beforehand by the conspirators—this leading question—but the episode of the anchor had not been foreseen. "If you've got any excuse for buttin' into my balloon and makin' me run the risk of losin' my life, you'd better be busy thinkin' it up, for I'm goin' to sue you for damages. Here's a man usin' all his wits and all his care in makin' an ascension, and havin' a hard job of gettin' away. And along you come and jump in and thrash round and get the men that's holdin' it

scared, and away we go, knockin' down everything and missin' death just by luck and a lally-hoo. Now, explain!"

Cap'n Sproul preserved his calmness under this angry insistence.

"You just let her run as she's head-in' for a while," he observed, "and I'll do some thinkin' on this. I've been busy for the last few minutes and I haven't had time to meditate."

The balloonist kept on with his recrimination.

"Say, look here," interrupted the cap'n, "you ain't under salary by that



board of trade, be you, to take me up here and jaw me?"

It was a purely random shot, inspired by the sheriff's surly remembrance that the present reign of disorder in Newry was due to the lawless activity of that organization. But it was a shot that took effect. The professor blinked hard, and his eyes fell under the sheriff's regard.

"Now that I've got time to ponder a little, seein' that the rush is over, it occurs to me that the one that was hollerin' loudest for 'em to let 'er go was you. I remember it in particular because you was doin' most of your hollerin' in my ear. There's nothin' like a calm, high place for thinkin' out problems," he remarked, gazing blandly out into the ether. "Things come to you so, you know! While I'm thinkin' out an answer to your question, suppose you think up something to explain why you was so blamed anxious to cast off as soon as you had me aboard?"

"You'll have hard work to show that I had anything to do with gettin' you mixed up in this," said the professor defiantly.

"Mebbe," agreed the sheriff. "But I arrest you here and now for bein' in the plot, and I attach this balloon for damages to me. That's all the official business I can think of to transact at present moment. And I don't reckon them peep shows is doin' enough business just now so that they need me back there," he concluded reflectively.

There was silence a long time—the utter silence of the vast skies.

The aeronaut studied the hard face of the sheriff and meditated on the prospects of broken engagements in that, the halcyon balloon season of the year, should this grim old man tie him up with arrest and attachment.

"I reckon you don't mean that about arrestin' me," he ventured at last. "And furthermore, I ain't in any jurisdiction of yours up here."

"I ain't much of a hand to split hairs about jurisdiction," returned the sheriff. "I've allus been a deep-sea fellow where there ain't any 'special talk of such things. I don't know yet where

we'll light, but I want to tell you now that when we do light, you'll land underneath with my grip on ye, and you'll go back to Newry village with me, even if I have to make you up into pound packages like sassage meat. You can consider that settled."

The professor compared his pipe-stem figure in tights with the sturdy form of this grizzled veteran and decided against himself.

"I ain't into this thing so deep as you think I be," said the balloonist at last. "I'm willin' to own up that there was a job put up on you, and I'm bein' used because a fellow's soul ain't his own when he's mixed up with the show business and is followin' the circuit along with the bunch. I'll tell you what I'll do with you, Mr. Sheriff, I'll pipe you to the bunch if you'll leave me out in the round-up. I've got three five-hundred-dollar fair jobs, and I want to be on and doin'."

"I ain't goin' to commit myself to any trades till I get my feet on terry firmy," declared the sheriff. "The quicker you get me there, the sooner you'll get this thing off'n your mind. Now what port be you goin' to make with this old puffball of your'n?"

"I don't know where we'll fetch up, sir," admitted the professor. "I don't dare to try to land with this wind blowin', and we with no anchor. We'd be makin' dents in the landscape for three miles before we fell to pieces or got hung up. All we can do is to let her run till it's night and comes off calm. We're as safe as the child in its cradle till then, with all this ballast and nothin' to bump. Usually I don't reckon on runnin' more than twenty miles or so, and then I run close, anchor, and rip her. I'm talkin' square and honest with you, and I hope you're goin' to consider that when the time comes."

"The more I think about it, the more I'm convinced that you're in a bad box," stated the sheriff, boring the hapless aeronaut with cold eyes. "There's plot and conspiracy, interferin' with an officer, abduction—why, I've knowed of men gettin' ten years in State prison for just that one crime alone. A good deal



depends on how I feel after we've landed."

The thought of that prospective landing inspired him to make a survey over the side of the basket, and he did so on his knees.

"Them lakes in scattered pretty thick down there. If there was three masts and a jib-boom to this infernal thing I could make port in the middle of a soft spot. But this ain't the kind of sailin' I take to." He stared up at the balloon bag discontentedly. "I'd rather be aflo't in a dory."

"I'll take a chance on a landin' if you will," volunteered the aeronaut. "We ought to be able to stab one of those lakes, and I reckon an old sailor like you can keep clear of the riggin'. That's the only danger, providin' a man's a good swimmer."

"Let her go!" said the cap'n, beginning to unlace his shoes. The aeronaut pulled his valve cord. His willingness to accommodate impressed the cap'n.

"Son," he volunteered, "if we land right side up and get ashore all right, so that I'm in strikin' distance of that board of trade and a few other things I know about, I'll take that offer of your'n—and I go you a peg further; I'll use your information and won't advertise you as lettin' it out. Then you can keep what they paid you for my ride. How much was it?"

"A hundred."

"Reasonable figger, and I'm much obleeged for the trip."

There was no further opportunity for conversation. The ground was coming up at them at a rate that made the cap'n wink hard. And by the way it slid sidewise under them they understood that the wind was still brisk.

"I'm goin' to take that pond across the ridge, there," stated the balloonist. "There are lots of boats out on it."

And so it happened that quiet fishermen on a summer's forenoon looked up to behold a flabby balloon scale over the spruces and plunge down into the lake's waters, dragging its basket through the foam its passage kicked up.

The nearest boats were prompt to salvage, and within a short half hour

Cap'n Sproul and his companion were on shore, baHoon and all.

While he was stamping about in the sunshine, drying out and waiting for the buckboard to be loaded with the wet silk that the professor was folding, the sheriff asked the obliging clerk of the sportsmen's hotel if he would ring up Newry village and have Mr. Hiram Look called to the telephone. And when at last it was announced that Mr. Look was ready to talk, the cap'n carefully set the receiver against his ear and spoke.

"This is me—your friend, Sproul. Oh, yes, it's me all right. I wanted to apologize for draggin' kedge through your oyster bed, there, this mornin'. Hold on—lemme talk. I hain't got time to answer all them questions. This is only a bulletin. I was only goin' to give you a little marine news. Cleared, Newry, June twentieth; The Buzzard. Log: Fair wind and successful trip. Homeward bound, and you can report us as li'ble to heave in about sundown. And now, outside of marine news, and in your line, the circus business, you might mention as an inside tip up and down that murderers' row of your'n that I'm headed that way, and that storm signals are ordered displayed."

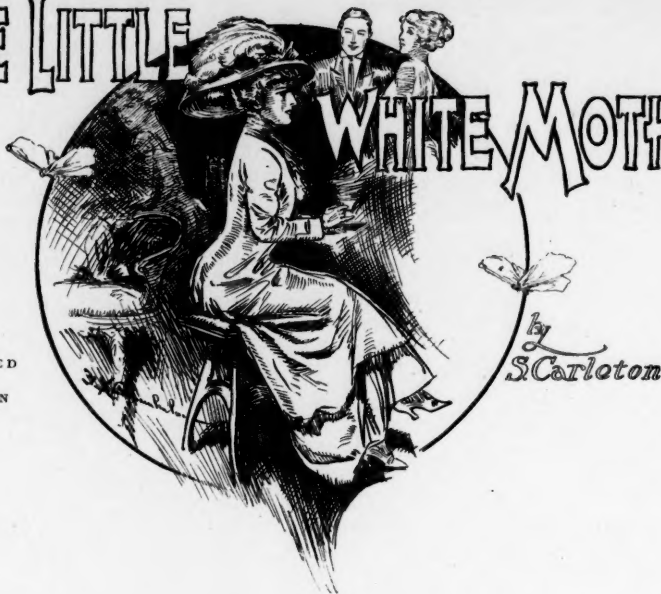
The cap'n listened a while, his grim smile not relaxing.

"Oh, yes, I *have* got sportin' blood in me, too," he broke in. "I've been up in a balloon to-day. That's one sign of it. Another sign is that I'm willin' to give all them land pirates six hours' good start. What's that you say? What are you goin' to have left for a show to-morrow? Well, there'll be a balloon ascension for one thing; I have found that balloon ascensions are popular and attractive, and you can refer to me as authority. For the rest—well, Hiram, you go burn a few rags in the places where them kickin' girls and flimflam fellows have been operatin', and after the thing has been fumigated some we'll see—we'll see!"

And he hung up the receiver and went out and took his seat on the waiting buckboard. The grim smile was still there.

# THE LITTLE WHITE MOTTH

ILLUSTRATED  
BY F. X.  
CHAMBERLIN



SALLY HAMILTON stood in front of the long glass that reflected one of Mrs. Atheling's spare rooms and incidentally, as a sort of afterthought, herself.

"I thought being one of a real house party would be lovely, and I'm having the most awful time of all my life," she said to herself forlornly. "If it weren't for being a coward I'd go straight home; but I was asked for a week, and for a week I'll stay! If I'm miserable people in this house sha'n't know it."

But her lip was trembling as she turned from the glass. When Mrs. Atheling had been nursed after a motor accident at Sally's home she had loved her, and accepted with rapture an invitation to her country house at Lake Loon. But her mental picture of the delights of a house party did not seem to be borne out by the reality.

Her arrival that afternoon had been perfectly awful; if she had known then even as much as she knew now about house parties she would have managed

it better. She writhed as she remembered how she had been ushered, train-dusty and untidy, into a big room full of intimately chattering people. She had stood in the middle of it, looking for her hostess as a sailor looks for a light-house; and looking in vain. There was no sign of Mrs. Atheling; there was just a jumble of strange faces, only one of which even stood out clearly to her dazzled eyes; there did not seem to be any one in the room who even knew Sally Hamilton was expected. She was suddenly acutely conscious that the white serge she had been goose enough to travel in was soiled and dusty, and that her hair was wild. A smart-looking woman said a word or two to her that she was too shy to answer except by a stupid murmur, and an elderly gentleman provided her with a cup of scalding tea. Then she seemed to be nobody's business. Every one else was sorting into twos for conversation or fours for bridge. Sally, sitting down hastily on a horrid stool with no back

to it, got a lump in her throat; this was not the way Mrs. Atheling had been received in *her* house! She blinked to get the tears out of her eyes, and nearly upset what was left of her tea.

A girl who carried her head so high that it seemed liable to upset her backward was looking at her across the room, and saying to a man beside her something at which he laughed—unwillingly, but still he laughed. It seemed to Sally that she would not have laughed at a girl who sat forlorn among strangers, and her heart swelled with an oddly personal disappointment. That very man had been the only person she had seemed to see clearly as she made her faltering entry; she had caught his gray eyes full on hers, and thought he looked kind; and now he had laughed. She was relieved that he and the high-headed girl went out together.

No one else took any notice of her, even scathing, except a solitary lady who looked up from a book long enough to murmur that "Rose Atheling might or might not be back to dinner; one never knew what she'd do, really!" At that, hope abandoned Sally. She set down her cup with a clink that turned the heads of the nearest bridge players, and made for the door. More by luck than anything else she happened on a maid who guided her to her room, and there thankfully she found herself alone—more alone than she had ever felt in her life. It was not till she was clean, had done over her hair and got into her dressing gown to rest that she even dared to think what it was going to mean to stay in a house like this for a week.

"I've got to stay," she decided sensibly, "and I've got to make the best of it. I'll go down to dinner, I suppose, and afterward I'll look at Gibson pictures I know by heart, while the rest giggle and play bridge. But"—and she set her small white teeth so firmly that the color came back to her cheeks—"they shall think I *like* looking at Gibson!"

She started at a man's voice outside her door.

"She looked exactly like a little white

moth that's getting burnt," it murmured. "Go in and see if she's altogether frizzled, Teresa, dear!"

"I will if you like," some one said impatiently. "But it's rubbish!"

And before Sally could realize that she was eavesdropping a knock announced the simultaneous entrance of the high-headed girl who had laughed at her.

"You're all right, are you?" she inquired off-handedly. "Got all you want?" If it had not been for Harry Jocelyn Miss Bailey would never have troubled to ask.

"Quite! I'm resting."

Sally's courage had come to her, though she had no idea how pretty she looked in her long white dressing gown, compared with the soot-marked white serge she had been idiot enough to arrive in. Teresa Bailey had, though, and she stood and stared.

"What a duck of a gown!" said she.

Sally had learned something already; she did not announce she had embroidered it herself.

"I thought there would be time to rest before dinner," she answered simply.

"Rather; dinner's not till eight."

And Miss Bailey disappeared as abruptly as she had come.

But her voice came back clearly through the door. "I told you she was all right. She is the image of a white moth, though—the downiest thing you ever saw!"

"Well, somebody's got to worry with her, no matter what she's like, and I suppose it will be I—it always is!" And a man laughed as he walked away.

Sally's face blazed. She knew quite well she had come in like a dazed moth, and if any one else had said so she would not have cared. But it was the gray-eyed man speaking; she had heard his laugh before. If she died for it he should not have "to worry with her." Quite irrelevantly she wondered if he were engaged to the girl he had called Teresa. Somehow she was grateful to neither of them for coming to look after her.

She dressed and went down to dinner, and even the arrival of her hostess



*She made somehow a pretty, and noticeable, exit from the room.*

in the middle of it did not lighten her heart much. Mrs. Atheling came in with her husband and two other men tailing after her, and to Sally's new and horrid sapience kissed her with the air of a woman who has asked a guest she had not thought would come. After dinner she did talk to her a little, and then—just as Sally had known would happen—joined a bridge table and left her sitting alone on a sofa with a huge volume of Gibson's drawings staring up at her. Involuntarily the girl laughed, but she was furious as she bent her gold-brown head over the pictures.

Her detached attention caught a woman's voice behind her.

"Oh, Harry and Teresa Bailey! I don't know; nobody does. But of course she owns him. He amuses himself with other girls, but he always goes back to Teresa. Come out if you want to talk."

Sally turned over a page. "Harry and Teresa Bailey" were nothing to her; but the next minute she was put to it not to start. The gray-eyed man had arrived from nowhere, and was seating himself beside her. It struck her oddly that his eyes were not at all amused now.

"I suppose you think we've no manners here, but Mrs. Atheling never introduces anybody," he said. "My name's Jocelyn, and I know you are Miss——"

"Sally Hamilton," composedly.

Unwillingly she took in the sunburnt, aquiline face, the long limbs and broad shoulders of the man Teresa owned. There was nobody in the Gibson book half so good-looking, but he should not worry with her because he supposed he had to. She maintained a soft silence.

"Don't you play bridge?" Jocelyn nodded at the bridge tables.

"I don't do anything." Sally had just two accomplishments, swimming and canoeing; neither of them would probably come to the fore here, and she had no intention of mentioning them.

Mr. Jocelyn looked at her with sudden respect. He had come to her because he was sorry for her, but he was

going to stay for pleasure. He hoped Teresa would not be needing him. Sally Hamilton was very, very pretty, and she had a mind of her own.

"I don't know how you'll manage here," he said. "We're a frightfully energetic household."

"I can go away if I'm bored." She looked at him quite easily, and suddenly turned her head to an open window behind them. "Don't you smell wood smoke?" she asked.

Jocelyn nodded. "The whole country round here's been on fire; Atheling's been lucky to escape it. Didn't you go through fires in the train?"

"That," said Sally softly, "was the reason my white serge was so dirty."

"It wasn't a bit," hastily. "You looked——"

"Like a white moth that's been half frizzled." For his life, and he was astuter than most men, he could not make out whether she were quoting or not. "I hope the fires won't come any closer; I don't want to frizzle any more."

"Come on the veranda and see if we can see them. It's quite warm."

"I'm going to bed," said Sally placidly. "Good night, Mr. Jocelyn."

Harry Jocelyn was not used to dismissal; it made him jump.

"We're going shooting in the morning. Won't you come?" he asked impulsively.

"Not to see things killed."

Her shudder was real, and he liked it in a girl. But he said blankly that she could not just sit in the house all day to-morrow.

"It's not here yet," retorted Sally.

Somehow she was not feeling either shy or lost now, yet she was not flattered by Jocelyn's attention. It would have been a different thing if he had bestowed it on her that afternoon instead of laughing and comparing her to a bedraggled moth; and she did not forget he was talking to her because some one had to. She rose with a soft little movement, and the light over her head showed each gold-capped ripple of her brown hair.

"You're not really going to bed



now?" Jocelyn rose too; he looked down at her quite eagerly. "I'll tell you what, Miss Hamilton. If you don't want to shoot to-morrow will you motor? I'd be awfully glad to show you Lake Loon." And he meant it. Ever since he had first laid eyes on her he had wanted to look after her, and perhaps Teresa Bailey was the only person in the house who would have believed it.

"I'll have to do whatever Mrs. Atheling arranges." But Sally's heart beat two quick strokes. She would have loved to motor with Mr. Jocelyn.

"Oh, Rose never arranges anything; everybody does as they like here," quickly. "Won't you—"

But Sally shook her head. She could still hear him saying somebody would have to worry with her, and he supposed it would be he. She made somehow a pretty, and noticeable, exit from the room; and Harry Jocelyn's eyes were not the only ones which followed her. Without knowing it the little girl from nowhere had won her spurs.

Everybody said good morning to her at breakfast, quite as if she belonged, but Mr. Jocelyn did not repeat his invitation of the night before. He sat with a worried sort of look beside Miss Bailey, and disappeared with her directly after breakfast. Sally spent her day golfing, over links that were quite hazy with smoke. That night there was no need for Gibson books nor for Harry Jocelyn's worrying with her; everybody was kind. If Jocelyn hung about her it was in vain. It was bedtime—every one's bedtime, not Sally's solitary exit—before he could catch her alone.

"You wouldn't go out with me to-day," he said almost humbly. "Will you to-morrow?"

None of Sally's pretty dignity in a hard place had been lost on him. He was really interested in her, as he had never been interested in a girl before in spite of what people said about Teresa; and he knew he was going to be more than interested, if only he had a chance. But Sally had turned quite pale as she met his eyes.

"You needn't have me on your

mind," she said very sweetly, but all the same she meant it. "You see, I happened to hear you say some one would have to look after me, and you supposed it would be you. And—well, you don't need to, you know. I was frightened and silly that first day, but afterward—well, it wasn't happy for me to have to think you *had* to look after me."

"Oh, don't!" Jocelyn's face burned. "It wasn't that. Listen!" But he shut his lips sharply, and with annoyance. Sally had disappeared.

When she reached her room the wood smoke from outside was thick in it. Twice she woke in the night with the acrid taste of it in her throat, and once she got out of bed to see where the fires were. But there was nothing to see but a red, smoke-strangled moon; not even a distant glare. Perhaps it was the smoke that made her sleep badly, but when she came to breakfast Jocelyn was gone, and all the other men with him. The bush fires were meaning something to-day. Every man within miles was out trying to beat them down. Mrs. Atheling said languidly it was not likely they would creep round to their side of Lake Loon, but she asked Sally and Miss Bailey to go for a walk with her and see.

A hundred yards out of the clearing that held the house and stables they were in thick woods, hot with a heat that was not that of summer. But there was no fire in sight. Mrs. Atheling said cheerfully that the alarm was all nonsense; the fires were a long way off, and she hoped her husband and the others would have sense to come home and leave beating them out to men who knew how. Teresa said nothing at all; she walked before Sally, silent and somehow strange. Sally herself was cross. She felt too like the celebrated person who bit off his nose to spite his face, to be gay; she would dearly have liked to be friends with Mr. Jocelyn, and he would probably never speak to her again. She walked on, not realizing how far, till Mrs. Atheling pulled up suddenly.

"We'd better go back," she said.





*"I'm going to get it! You two stay by the shore, and if the fire comes get into the lake."*

"We've walked miles, and I don't see anything, except that the smoke's getting horribly thick."

Sally came out of her preoccupation with a start. She took a queer look at the woods behind her, and grew pale. She had seen bush fires before.

"I don't believe we can go back," she said steadily. "I believe the fire's

got behind us. Where's the lake? If we're wise we'll get to it."

"Sally, what rubbish!" Mrs. Atheling scoffed. "We can't go on! I'm tired, and it's nearly lunch-time."

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Sally caught Teresa's arm. "Make her go on, can't you? I don't know, but I believe the fire's got behind us somehow, and we don't want to be

burnt up." She was not frightened, only she had experience. But Teresa had none.

"No one can make Rose do anything," said she listlessly. "If the fire's cut us off we can't help it. Anyway, they say you stifle before you burn."

"We're not going to do either," cried Sally indignantly. She cast a woods-bred eye behind her, sniffed the hot air, and shoved Teresa on. It came over her that not only had the fire cut them off, but that the women with her were perfectly helpless. "Get to the lake!" she ordered abruptly. "Be quick!"

The smoke was thick now, great choking whirls of it. She could hear the crackling hiss that meant fire; but perhaps, perhaps it would not follow them to the lake. Mrs. Atheling scuttled ahead obediently, but Teresa hung back till she had almost to be pushed along. Her head was higher than ever, but she was winking back tears.

"We're through—there's the lake!" shrieked Sally.

She shoved her charges through the last thicket of spruces into a clearing on a point; and stood silent and appalled. The fire had cut them off thoroughly with a wide half circle behind them. On each side of the point they stood on stretched a seething furnace; the blazing trees looked electric in the dull sunlight, and to right and left the whole wooded shore spouted fire. There was one gap in it, just one; it looked like a road. But they could not get to it. Between it and them ran snakes of fire that burst into flinging spouts of flame at every tree. Teresa only stood and stared vaguely, but Mrs. Atheling began to cry.

"Don't!" Sally scowled. "We're cut off, but I expect we can do something, only I don't know my way. What's that gap that isn't burning?"

"The road," sobbed Mrs. Atheling, "but we can't get there. Sally, do you think we've got to be burnt?"

"Can you swim? Well, I mean?" Through the stinging smoke she saw an island in the lake, nearly half a mile off. The fire would not be likely to jump that far.

"Only a little—and Teresa can't at all."

Sally bit her lip. If only they could swim the whole thing would be fun, but as it was—

"What's on that island?" she demanded. "Do I see a sort of shed?"

"We keep a canoe there. But it's no good to us now," wailed Mrs. Atheling. Teresa had never said a word.

"Isn't it?" Electrically Sally flung off her white linen frock and stood in her slip bodice and short silk petticoat. "I'm going to get it! You two stay by the shore, and if the fire comes get into the lake."

As she slipped into the water with a long shooting rush she was startled by the hoot of a motor. It sounded quite close, then it receded hurriedly. Some one must have seen them, tried to get down the road and been forced back. It was no good to look to them for rescue; the only thing was to be quick with the canoe. Sally turned on her side and cut through the water with the overhead stroke with which she won all her swimming races, but she had never tried a race like this.

The man, who had rushed his motor as far into the fire as he dared before he sprang from it and sent the chauffeur flying back to wait in safety, choked back a shout. He was not thinking about safety himself as he tore down the road to the shore with fire clutching at him from each side.

He had come back to the house with a message for Teresa, a message that mattered more than ever when he learned where she and the other two had gone; but he was not thinking of Teresa's messages now. That was Sally, his little white moth, swimming; he knew nothing about her swimming races, but he did know about the eddy between her and the island. If he were not quick Sally would never land. Not for one second did he think she was callously saving herself; he knew she was going for the canoe just as he knew everything she did would be right. And even as he sprang into the lake Sally disappeared. Jocelyn swam as he had never swum in his life.



*"I've got to carry you to the motor. I can't have you scorched any more."*

He knew where the eddy would fling the girl, and he made there, slantingly, only to gulp a mouthful of water in his abject relief as she came up like a cork between him and the island.

"Had to dive," she gasped, her lungs full of smoky air as he reached her. "It was—pretty long!"

"You brick!" said Jocelyn.

Side by side the two swam for the canoe at the landing.

As she climbed out on the staging Sally suddenly seemed to realize who it was. She had not been surprised when she saw him; it had seemed natural that he should come. She never gave



a thought to her appearance; her short silk skirt was very like a bathing dress.

"How did you come?" she cried.

"Road! But the motor couldn't stick it. Sally"—he was pale—"didn't either of those selfish pigs tell you about the eddy?"

"It wouldn't have made any difference."

"It would to me!" Both were getting the canoe into the water, mindful of the two who waited. They spoke in jerks.

"You needn't blame Teresa," snapped Sally. "I don't see why you call her names. She's frightfully miserable when you're not there."

"Teresa," said Jocelyn scornfully. "I wasn't thinking of Teresa! It was *you*." He tumbled into the canoe as Sally took her place in the bow of it. "It's always been you ever since I first saw you," he said recklessly across the space that divided them.

It was well canoeing was Sally's other accomplishment; she set the stroke mechanically, even while she gasped with happiness; but she did not dare think of anything but the fire and the two women who waited for her. The canoe leaped across the water; and, alone, even Sally's paddling might not have got it there in time. Mrs. Atheling and Teresa were up to their necks in the lake, and behind them the banks roared. Rose Atheling nearly upset the canoe as she climbed in dripping, but Teresa stood still, with her eyes on Jocelyn's face.

"You've got news, Harry! You know something!" she said frantically. The strange hardness of her face was broken as a cloud breaks. "Is it—he isn't *gone*?"

"He'll be here to-night," said Jocelyn. "You'd have been a fool to make a burnt offering of yourself, Teresa. It's all right."

Teresa swayed, clutching the canoe.

"Get in!" shrieked Mrs. Atheling. "Don't stop to *talk*, you idiot! There are sparks in my hair!"

Teresa got in. But she was crying in a different way from Rose Atheling, as she crouched in the canoe.

Jocelyn turned its head to the road. The sides of it were only glowing now, not blazing; in their wet clothes the women could make a run in safety to where the motor waited behind the fire. Sally had taken off her shoes to swim; he motioned to her with a queer authority to stay in the canoe while he went up with Teresa and Rose; and Sally waited, her eyes sore with smoke, her wet clothing decorated with dead sparks, and her mind a whirl of confusion. She heard Jocelyn's scorched boots hiss in the water as he came back to the canoe.

"I've got wraps for you in the motor," he said in a hard voice. "I don't want you to get your death of cold for this. I—Sally, you believe I meant it when I said I cared," abruptly. "You don't hate me, do you?"

Sally looked at him bravely. "No," she said, with her funny little truthful dignity, "but I don't understand, either, about Teresa. They told me you—"

"Teresa," said he quietly, "has been secretly married to my brother for a year. They quarreled on some silly thing, and he wouldn't give in and neither would she. She thought he was sailing to Europe to-night without a word to her."


"Oh!" Sally knew suddenly why Teresa would not have cared if the fire had caught them. "And now—"

"Now he'll be at the house by the time we get there; he's given in. He's been as wretched as Teresa, and you don't know how bad that was. If I hadn't stuck to her pretty hard I believe she'd have killed herself this last month. Now, are you going to worry about Teresa?"

"No," said Sally very shyly. "But—you did say I looked like a scorched white moth!"

"So you do—more than ever!" The laugh he gave as he looked at a black smooch across her face thrilled her, because it was the laugh of happiness a woman hears from only one man in the world. "I believe it was why I loved you! Stand up, Sally, I've got to carry you to the motor. I can't have you scorched any more."





# *The* RETURN OF JOHN SMITH

*By Herbert Quick*

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

HIS name was John Smith, but he was not otherwise unworthy of notice. Out of her vast, tempestuous experience Blanche Slattery admitted this as she swept into the offices and looked down at the boy, noting the curl in his hair which speaks of the hidden vein of vanity, the wide blue eyes which told of a stratum of mysticism, the unsubdued brawn of hand and wrist which reminded her more of harvests than of field-meets, the mouth closely shut in purposeful attention to one Mr. Thompson's "Commentaries on the Law of Corporations."

He thought her the stenographer and kept his eyes on the page. She laid a card on his desk—a card at which he looked with some attention before rising to meet her eyes with his own, which dilated in a sort of horror, as she thought. Her cheek actually burned as she turned aside with the crisp statement of her business.

"I want to see Judge Thornton," she said.

Without a word John Smith pushed a button and listened at a telephone. The judge took his time as usual, and John gazed at the Slattery person with the receiver pressed against his ear. She was powdered and painted; the full corsage of her dress glittered with passementerie; in her form the latest fad was exaggerated into a reminiscence of medieval torturing-devices. Through the enamel of her skin dark crescents showed under her great black eyes, the whites of which were mottled here and there with specks of red. The once sweet lips had lost their softness

of curve with their vermeil tincture and had fallen into hard repose.

John knew her profession and how she dominated her world of saddest hilarity—a world which through all mutations of time and institutions persists as on that day when Samson went to Gaza. He felt that there emanated from her a sort of authority like a sinister manifestation of the atmosphere surrounding men of power and sway—as though by dark and devious ways this soul, too, had carved out a realm in which it darkly reigned. She wondered, when he spoke, whether the softness in his voice were for her or whether it were a thing of habit.

"Judge Thornton is sorry that he cannot see you this morning," he said. "Between ten and eleven to-morrow if it is convenient for you—"

"All right," she said. "I'll be here at half-past ten. Good morning!"

The perfume of her presence, the rustling of her departure, the husky depth of her voice haunting his memory, the vast vistas through which the mind of the country boy fared forth venturesomely, impelled by the new contacts of this town in which he had undertaken to scale the citadel of professional success—all these militated against the sober enticements of the law of corporations; and when Judge Thornton entered unheard, John Smith started as though detected in some offense.

"The law," said the judge, launching the hoary quotation, "is a jealous mistress."

John Smith blushed, but saw no



"I always feel presumptuous," said Mrs. Brunson, hoarsening her voice to the pitch she always adopted in public speaking, "when I differ from other commentators."

lodgment for a denial where there was no accusation. He had been allowing his thoughts to go wool-gathering; but now he began questioning the judge on the doctrine of the rights of minority stockholders. The judge condescended to a five-minute lecture which would have been costly had it been given for a client before the court. In the midst of the talk there bustled in a young man—a boy, in fact, who accosted the lawyer familiarly.

"Just a minute, judge. About that mass-meeting Tuesday—I'm Johnson of the *News*, you know. Will you speak?"

"I don't think the readers of the *News* are lying awake about it," answered the judge, looking at the boy amusedly. "But my present intentions go no further than to attend the meeting."

"What about the movement for cheaper gas?" asked the reporter. "Will the meeting start anything?"

"The meeting," said the judge, "will be a law unto itself."

"Sure," replied Johnson of the *News*. "But a word from you as to the extortions of the gas company——"

"Will be addressed to the meeting—if I have any," said the judge. "I——"

"Oh, all right!" interrupted the boy. "That's what I wanted! Good-by!"

John Smith's amazement at the boy's self-possession and ready, impudent effrontery, passed away in a visualization of Judge Thornton's big, strong figure at the meeting, fulminating against oppression—the oppression of to-day—as did Patrick Henry and James Otis against the wrongs of their times. Now, as of old, thought John Smith, the lawyer is a public officer, charged with public duties, alert to do battle with any tyrant or robber. He flushed with pleasure at this conception of the greatness of the profession.

"As a science," said the judge, as though in answer to John's thought, "it's the greatest field of the intellect. It's the practise that's laborious and full of compromises."

"Yes," said John Smith, lamenting the interrupted lecture on the rights of minority stockholders. Judge Thornton had donned his coat and his hat.

"I'm off for the day. Good day to you—oh, I almost forgot. Do you want to hear a paper on 'King Lear' to-night? Nellie thought you might. Poor paper—but you'll meet people, and that's a part of the game."

"Oh, yes!" cried John. "I'd be glad to!"

"Come to the house about eight," said the judge, "and go with Nellie and me."

Ah, this was living! Why, at home he knew scarcely a person who had read more of Shakespeare than the quarrel scene in the fifth reader. Surely it was good fortune that had made his father and Judge Thornton playmates in boyhood. And to go with Nellie Thornton, too!

"Paint out that sign!" he heard some one say. "And what goes in the place of it, sir?" asked the painter. "Thornton & Smith," replied the judge's voice. "My son-in-law, Mr. Smith, has been taken into the firm."

The stenographer saw exaltation in his face as he closed the safe, bade her good night and went home.

As he sat beside Nellie that evening, he remembered the colloquy between her father and the painter, and shuddered as he contemplated the possibility of thought-transference and of its ruinous potentialities. As a protection against telepathy he gave his whole attention to Judge Thornton's paper on "Lear." The indescribable agony of the old king's frenzy, the whirling tempest of the tragedy in which he wandered to his doom clutched at the boy's heart. The wolfish *Goneril* and *Regan*, the sweet *Cordelia*, the bared gray head, the storm, the night— By some occult warning John Smith knew that Nellie was not pleased with his absorption, and that the discussion had begun.

"This treatment is so original," said the lady president. "Everybody must be full of questions. Now let us have a perfectly free discussion—don't wait to be called upon, please!"

To John Smith the lady president seemed enthusiasm personified; yet only a few people arose, and these merely said how much they had enjoyed the paper. John Smith could see himself on his feet pouring forth comment and exposition, but he sat close, hoping that no adverse fate might direct the lady president's attention to him. The discussion was dragging; one could tell that from the increasing bubblikeness of the lady president's enthusiasm as she strove conscientiously to fulfil her task of imposing culture upon society.

"I'm sure there must be something more," she said. "Perhaps the most precious pearl of thought of the evening awaits just one more dive. Mrs. Brunson, can you not—"

"I always feel presumptuous," said Mrs. Brunson, hoarsening her voice to the pitch she always adopted in public speaking, "when I differ from other commentators. But I also feel that the true critic must put himself in the place of the character under examination. Isn't there a good deal of justification for *Goneril* and *Regan*? I do not see, personally, how *Lear* could be supposed to need all those hundred knights, with their drinking and roistering and dogs and—and all that. I believe *Lear's* fate was of his own making, and—"

John Smith, the unsophisticated, was startled. The unutterable fate of "the old, kind king"—could this Olympian circle hold such treason?

No, you unnatural hags,  
I will have such revenges on you both,  
That all the world shall—I will do such things—  
What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be  
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep;  
No, I'll not weep:  
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart  
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,  
Or ere I'll weep. O, fool, I shall go mad!

The fiery denunciation rang in the boy's ears in answer to the words of this modern woman with her silks and plumes, standing here in a church and, in spite of the softening things of her heritage, sympathizing with these fierce



"The last thing he said when he got his was, 'Blanche, old girl, take care of dad.'"

sisters! Others arose and agreed with her. One read the words of *Regan*:

O, sir, you are old;  
Nature in you stands on the very verge  
Of her confine: you should be ruled and led  
By some discretion that discerns your state  
Better than you yourself.

These, was the comment, were the really sane words regarding *Lear*.

"Oh, well!" said Judge Thornton as John broke his fast and the abstinence of a lifetime in the parlor, upon the cakes and wine served by Nellie. "It

didn't surprise me a bit. Mrs. Brunson thinks she'd do as *Goneril* and *Regan* did with their father—and she would. She'd avoid the little peccadilloes with *Edmund* and so remain technically virtuous—the best people are the worst, in some things, John; never forget that. It will be useful to remember it. And the worst are so nearly as good as the best—come into the office when that Slattery person comes in the morning, and you'll see what I mean. I'll give you some papers to draw for her."

The Slattery person swept into the private office with a rustle of stiffest silks, reminding the youth of the corn-husks at home in shucking-time, leaving behind her a whiff of all the Orient. John Smith walked into her presence palpitating as at the approach to something terrible and daunting and mystically fateful to such as himself—as a sailor might draw warily near the black magnetic rocks, which, approached too closely, would draw the very nails from his ship and dissolve his craft in the billows. When Judge Thornton remarked by way of left-handed introduction that Mr. Smith would draw the papers, the woman paid John no attention other than to bow and look straight before her. The youth felt conscious of the same shuddering admiration for her that he might have felt for some gaudy, bright-eyed serpent.

"It's a simple matter, I guess," she said. "I want to make over some property so Abner Gibbs of Bloomington will get fifty dollars sure every month as long as he lives."

"Not so very simple," said the judge, "but quite possible. But why don't you remit it to him yourself?"

"I want to cinch it while I've the money. You see, it's this way. In—in my—business"—she looked into John Smith's girlish eyes and hesitated—"everything is uncertain. It's a feast or a famine. A wave of reform may strike the town to-morrow, and the lid goes on. The protection you pay for may be taken from you next week. You've no rights. You ain't human. So I fix the fifty a month for the old man while I can, see?"

"Gibbs—Gibbs!" said the judge. "Relation of yours?"

"In a way. Does it make any difference?"

"It goes to the consideration," said the lawyer. "Love and affection, you know."

"Well," said the Slattery person, "his son was my solid man—my side-partner—my husband. The last thing he said when he got his was, 'Blanche, old girl, take care of dad. You know his weakness. Don't let him starve!' And I ain't going to!"

"His weakness?" queried the judge. "What did he mean?"

"Drink," said the Slattery person. "It's in the blood. But he can't last long—and he's Jim's father!"

She looked out of the window and dabbed with a lace handkerchief at her bright eyes, which she dared not wipe for fear of ruin to the appliqué complexion. Suddenly she had, to the mind of the susceptible John Smith, become a woman, with a woman's weakness and yearning over the departed Jim—of the blackness of whose life John had no means of taking the measure. He felt all at once that this person had shown feelings so like those he would have expected from his mother that it startled him.

"Oh, we're all alike!" said the judge when she had gone. "These things are worth the lawyer's study. Human nature—human nature! We must get above it and study it! Just ponder on the contradictions in the bases of life involved in this Slattery person and Mrs. Brunson's feeling toward *Lear*. Here's a woman, that no one at the circle last night would touch with anything shorter than a ten-foot pole or lighter than a club, who is actually carrying out toward a drunkard in Bloomington a policy of love and humanity that would be beyond Mrs. Brunson. She'd say: 'Let him behave the way I say, and I'll take him in!' Any of us moral folks would do the same, too. No knights and roistering for us! Quite a study—eh, John?"

John sat silent, far afloat from his moorings. The judge was too deep, too



ethically acute for him. Perhaps by long association he, John Smith, might grow in moral height and mental grasp, so as to—

"I don't know," said Judge Thornton, "which is the worse—sale of the body, or barter of the soul. I don't mean that the body can be sold without the soul going with it, though Epictetus seems a case in point in favor of the separable-transaction theory; but if it can, sale of the soul would seem the more ruinous. I—"

Judge Thornton was interrupted by the opening of the office door and the entrance of a brisk, capable-looking, vandyke-bearded man who carried a cane and bore himself with an ease that seemed somehow at war with something of restraint—the ease on the surface, the embarrassment underneath, like a dead swell coming in against the breeze. There was a triumphant gleam in Judge Thornton's eyes, filmed at once with self-possession and inscrutable calm. "Come in, Mr. Avery," he said.

"Just a word with you," said Mr. Avery, "in—"

"Certainly!" said the judge. "Right in here, Mr. Avery."

Mr. Avery passed into the private office. Judge Thornton remained for a word with John Smith.

"This is the vice-president of the gas company," he said. "Don't mention his call and don't allow me to be disturbed."

John Smith was triumphant. The very might of Thornton's ability and power had brought the gas company to their knees! This crucial stage of the gas fight thrust entirely out of his mind the deep moral and ethical consideration of the relations of the Slattery person to the discussion of "Lear." The law, as of old, was a great profession. Would any of the Boone County folks be able to believe that he, John Smith, was so near the heart of big things as to sit here while Judge Thornton won this great bloodless victory for the people?

Mr. Avery came out cordially smiling upon Judge Thornton, who looked tri-

umphant, pleased, uplifted. For a man who had just been throttled, Mr. Avery looked in rather good form.

"I'll send all the papers over to you, judge," he said. "And I'm mighty glad we've got together. It ought to have been done before; but you know how it is when you leave things to subordinates."

"Oh, well," said the judge. "Of course I'm very glad; but the subordinates may have done the right thing. Maxwell & Wilson are good men, but local conditions may—"

They went out into the anteroom, and John Smith heard them go away together. He felt disquieted. The appearances were so different from what he had expected. Not that it was in the least degree his affair, but—

The newsboy threw in the evening paper. John Smith looked at once for the account of the gas fight.

The anti-ordinance forces make no secret of their regret that Judge Thornton has seen fit to withdraw his promise to address the mass-meeting on Tuesday. Late this afternoon he told a *News* representative that he should not attend, and that in his opinion a study of the gas question will convince any business man that the illuminant cannot be delivered at the meter at anything short of the rate now paid here. This is regarded by some as a reversal of Judge Thornton's position; but, as a matter of fact, in all his public utterances the judge has suspended judgment on the merits of the question. The outlook for a successful movement cannot be regarded as bright to-day.

John Smith was looking at the paper as though it were some published blasphemy, some unspeakable profanation of all things good and holy, when Judge Thornton returned, whistling like a man at peace with the world and himself. The judge went into his private office and came out with a thin slip of paper folded in the palm of one smooth, strong hand.

"Too bad you're not a full-fledged lawyer, John, instead of a beginner. I could use you a good deal. My practise is getting more extensive. I've just been retained as the general counsel of the gas company. Oh, all you have to do is to wait and make yourself





*He came back past the Thornton home, where he paused in the gray dawn and looked at one lace-curtained window to murmur "Good-by."*

indispensable! *You'll* be getting plums like that one of these days. It's a great game! Good night."

Good night, indeed! There was no thunder and lightning like that on the heath when *Lear* went mad; but, to a boy whose world had suddenly tumbled into pieces, the snow which drove softly against his cheek and slithered hissing along the asphalt was a natural

feature to dwell in his memory forever. He wandered out through the area of high buildings, past the residences, to where the snow rattled on the corn-husks that reminded him of the Slatery person's silks. He had confused visions of Mrs. Brunson, dressed in Judge Thornton's decent high hat, flaunting gaudy garments and painting her face for indescribable drinking-



*"Judge Thornton says he wants to do all he can for me, and I think he does; but I guess I am not cut out for a lawyer."*

bouts. He came back past the Thornton home, where he paused in the gray dawn and looked at one lace-curtained window to murmur "Good-by." At the door of the office-building where his days had been spent since his coming to town, he went in from force of habit and pushed the button for the elevator. No sound rewarded the effort, and he pushed again impatiently. Then he laughed as he noted the elevator-cages about him, all shut down, all empty like cells from which the lunatic occupants had escaped. A woman who had begun scrubbing the marble steps looked at him curiously as the mirthless

laugh sounded through the empty building.

John Smith climbed flight after flight, opened the door which would never have "Thornton & Smith" on it, sat down at his desk and wrote:

DEAR FATHER: I am quite well. Everything looks favorable for my studies. Judge Thornton says he wants to do all he can for me, and I think he does; but I guess I am not cut out for a lawyer. It isn't quite what I thought it was. If you are still willing to send me to the State college and give me that agricultural course, I believe I'll go. There's something about the farm that's always there; and you know it's there. I'll be home as soon as I can pack up. Your loving son,  
JOHN SMITH.



# WOMAN IN THE MAKING OF AMERICA

BY H. ADDINGTON BRUCE

## VI.—IN PRESENT-DAY AMERICA

**I**MPRESSIVE and often thrilling as has been the story of woman's work and influence in past epochs of American history, it is safe to say that never has she played a more important part than she is playing to-day. Within the space of a comparatively few years she has extended her activities in directions and to a degree undreamed by the noble matrons and maids who in former times presented such inspiring examples to their own and future generations. In all walks of life—in business, in professional pursuits, in the arts—the American woman is more numerous and conspicuously represented than ever before. Nor has she thereby lost any of the distinctive charms of her womanliness, or in any way weakened her claim on our affection, esteem, admiration, and gratitude.

With increased freedom for individual self-expression she has gained, and taken advantage of, increased power to make her collective influence felt for good in the life of the nation. Nothing is more significant in this connection than the growth of the so-called "woman's club," which has been the subject of so much ill-natured and ill-advised criticism. It has been charged that the club movement among women involved neglect of home duties, would increase frivolity, and meant the ultimate disruption of family life. However well-grounded these objections may be in the case of other countries, they are glaringly erroneous when applied to the United States. Here the

woman's club has developed into a most valuable and powerful instrument for social betterment.

Its remote origin, as readers of my opening article will remember, may with some reason be traced to the meetings of those early Puritan women who used to assemble at Mrs. Anne Hutchinson's home in seventeenth-century Boston and discuss theological and other burning questions of the day. But it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that women's clubs in the modern sense began to make their appearance with the organization of the Ladies' Library Society, of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and the Minerva Club, of New Harmony, Indiana, the establishment of which speaks volumes for the progressiveness of the women of the Middle West.

Any immediate extension of the movement thus set on foot was prevented by the outbreak of the Civil War. Nevertheless, the woman's club indirectly gained greatly from that tremendous conflict. The notable services rendered by the Sanitary Commission and its subsidiary Soldiers' Aid Societies, went far to remove long-standing prejudices against the participation of women in public affairs, and at the same time helped women to realize the progress they might hope to achieve by organized coöperation. There had long been a growing sentiment that the laws and customs of the country worked to the disadvantage of women, and after the Civil War this sentiment crystal-

lized and found expression, on the one hand in an "equal-suffrage" movement, and on the other in the "club" movement, which was definitely launched in 1868 by the founding, almost simultaneously, of the New England Woman's Club and the oddly named Sorosis.

The former owed its inception largely to the genius of Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, who not long ago was reverently acclaimed "the most distinguished woman in the United States," and had even then attained international reputation, not only as the author of the immortal "Battle Hymn of the Republic," but also as a zealous humanitarian. Only the previous year she and her husband, the great-hearted Doctor Samuel G. Howe, had won the warm gratitude of the people of Greece for visiting them and aiding them in their struggle for national independence. Under the influence of Mrs. Howe and her associates—who included such well-known women as Mrs. Lucy Stone, Mrs. Mary A. Livermore, and Mrs. Edna P. Cheney—the idea of social service was from the first a leading principle in the New England Woman's Club. Besides providing literary programmes for the entertainment and cultural development of its members, it struck out along philanthropic lines, establishing a free employment bureau and a horticultural school for girls.

In connection with the founding of Sorosis an interesting story is told. When Charles Dickens made his second American visit, in 1867-68, he was given a banquet by the Press Club of New York. Mrs. Jane Cunningham Croly, the brilliant newspaper woman whose writings under the pseudonym of "Jennie June" have delighted so many thousands of readers, was at the time a member of the editorial staff of the *World*, and it seemed to her only right and fitting that she should attend the Press Club's banquet. Her application for a ticket met with a prompt refusal, on the score of her sex.

Greatly disappointed, and not a little incensed, Mrs. Croly invited a number of her friends—among whom were Mrs.

Charlotte B. Wilbour, Mrs. Eliza Botta, Kate Field, and Alice and Phoebe Cary—to meet at her home and discuss the formation of a club exclusively for women. The result of their meeting was the birth of Sorosis, in March, 1868, with Alice Cary as its first president.

There were only twelve charter members, but before the year was out Sorosis had grown remarkably both in numbers and influence. Other women in other cities began to organize, some along the lines of the New England Woman's Club, but more taking the pioneer New York club as their model. According to a clubwoman of wide experience, writing as recently as last year, "no other club in the country has been so much copied, imitated, and envied as the first and famous Sorosis. Interest in the club movement was intensified by the meeting of a Congress of Women, convened in New York in 1869, in response to a call from Mrs. Croly. Four years later, and again mainly on the initiative of Mrs. Croly, the Association for the Advancement of Women was founded, under the presidency of Mrs. Livermore, who was afterward succeeded by Mrs. Howe. Than these three women—Mrs. Croly, Mrs. Howe, and Mrs. Livermore—none deserves greater credit as a constructive pioneer in promoting the interests and extending the influence of the women of present-day America.

Naturally enough, while many of the women's clubs followed the example of the New England organization and embarked in various philanthropic enterprises, their chief concern at first was to benefit their individual members and to secure greater freedom of action for women in general. But as time brought with it increased recognition of "woman's rights," they became decreasingly self-centred. They acquired, so to speak, a "community consciousness," and began to attack problems of importance to them not only as women and mothers but as residents of the cities and towns in which they made their homes.

They undertook, for example, to

study the conditions of life among the poor, and to agitate for sanitary and other reforms that would promote the health, happiness, and efficiency of slum dwellers. They established and aided educational institutions of all sorts—public libraries, schools of domestic science, manual-training schools, kindergartens. Some laid stress on the need for reforms in municipal government and administration. Others became busy hives of cooperative industry, a most impressive illustration being found in the work of the Woman's Industrial Union, a Boston organization which was founded in the eighties, today boasts a membership of three thousand, and annually expends forty thousand dollars in helping the poor to help themselves.

The next and inevitable step was a union of the different clubs scattered in all parts of the United States. This was foreshadowed in 1889 when a few literary clubs, in response to a call from Sorosis, federated with one another. In the following year, likewise on the invitation of Sorosis—and Mrs. Croly—delegates met in New York to form what has since won world-wide fame as the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Beginning with a membership of less than one hundred clubs, it has grown until, after an interval of not yet twenty years, it comprises over five thousand clubs with a total membership of four hundred thousand women. Add to these the members of organizations independent of, but affiliated with, the General Federation—such as the International Sunshine Society, the Woman's Outdoor Art League of the American Civic Association, the National Society of New England Women, and the Woman's National Press Association—and we have an army of between seven and eight hundred thousand well-organized, well-directed, and enthusiastic women whose watchwords are "The Home, Patriotism, and Good Government."

The presence of such an army is in itself a guarantee of a happy future for the land in which we dwell. All over

the country the clubwomen are waging a great battle for social progress. They are fighting vice and crime, ignorance and disease; they are demanding humane legislation to protect the weak and lowly; they make no compromise with greed, brutality, or injustice; everywhere they are carrying on a great educational campaign to promote a higher cultural development, a livelier civic sense, and a loftier morality in the individual and in the nation. Their outlook is in no way restricted. They labor for the welfare not only of the people of their own day but of generations yet unborn.

"Except in the United States Congress," emphatically asserts Josiah Strong, president of the American Institute for Social Service, "I know of no body of men or women representing so much of intellect and heart, so much of culture and influence, and so many of the highest hopes and noblest possibilities of the American people as the General Federation of Women's Clubs."

Similar testimony comes from Ben B. Lindsey, the Colorado man who has made such a splendid record as judge of the juvenile court in Denver. "For the past few years," he says, "I have been actively engaged in the interest of better laws for the protection of the home and the children. In this behalf I have visited some twenty States. I have found wonderful progress, and scarcely without exception it has been the members of the women's clubs who have championed every good law and secured the passage of nearly all the advanced legislation upon the statute books for the protection of the home and the children."

"It would take a volume to give you adequately a small portion of what I know as to the beneficence of activities of women in connection with American Civic Association work and kindred work," writes J. Horace McFarland, president of the American Civic Association, in a letter to the author. "Some things they do so exceptionally well that I do not see how the work could be done without them. I have said a



great many times on the platform, in answering calls from communities for addresses intended to get those communities started in practical work for better living conditions, that I did not know of a successful regenerative movement that was not inspired or underwritten by the women of the community."

The facts bear out these glowing tributes. To give a notable instance, the organized pressure brought to bear by clubwomen was a potent factor in effecting the sorely needed reform embodied in the Pure Food Law of 1906. The General Federation of Women's Clubs declared for its enactment, as did the State Federations in the General Federation and individual clubs in the State Federations. Committees were appointed for the express purpose of educating public opinion to the importance of the proposed law and persuading reluctant Congressmen to vote the right way. In the opinion of many good judges the influence thus exercised was absolutely decisive. And even to-day, three years after the victory has been won, the pure food committees of the General and State Federations are hard at work, determined that there shall be no evasion of the law, and agitating for further reforms, particularly in the way of improving the milk supply and improving sanitary conditions in markets and provision stores.

Similarly, the clubwomen have thrown themselves heart and soul into the movement now under way for the conservation of America's natural resources and scenic assets. The saving of the Palisades on the Hudson River was chiefly due to the energetic action of women's clubs in New Jersey. The famous cliff dwellings of Colorado would have been lost to the nation had it not been for the beneficent activity of a number of Colorado women who organized a Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, gained the support of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and instituted a successful campaign for the creation of the Mesa Verde National Park. In Minnesota, women

prevented a "land grab," and afterward secured the enactment of a State forestry law to put a stop to the depredations of lumbermen and town-site operators. The State Federation of New Hampshire is at the present moment lending powerful aid in the struggle for the preservation of the White Mountain forests. So, too, in New York, where the State Federation is battling bravely against the vandalism that threatens to convert the Adirondacks and the Catskills into barren wastes. Elsewhere, particularly in Pennsylvania, Maine, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and California, women's clubs have done splendid work for forest preservation.

The movement to rescue Niagara Falls from the rapacious grasp of commercialism has been loyally supported by women in all parts of the country. Both through their clubs and as individuals they are ably seconding the efforts of the American Civic Association, which has made the saving of Niagara its special care. Mr. McFarland, from whom I have already quoted, tells a good story illustrative of the interest and enthusiasm shown by the women of the United States in attacking the Niagara problem. As president of the American Civic Association he had occasion to attend several hearings in Washington. At one hearing, held in the War Office, President Taft, then Secretary of War, after listening to what Mr. McFarland had to urge in behalf of Niagara, turned to him with some impatience, and said: "Why, you have made even my mother and aunt write me, begging me to save Niagara Falls!" Well may Mr. McFarland say, as he does, that women have been most insistent for righteousness in this cause.

Another problem of national importance to which the clubwomen are giving earnest and productive thought is the securing of remedial industrial legislation for women and children. The industrial and child-labor committees of the General and State Federations, and of many of their clubs, have gone

into the homes of the workers, and into mills, factories, and stores, investigating the conditions under which women and children toil. Their aim is the utter abolition of child labor, and the protection of working women from employers who would overwork them, or compel them to labor under injurious conditions. In many cases special agents are employed, men and women quick to detect violations of existing laws, and skilled in gathering data to reinforce demands for reform. Of course they have met, and will continue to meet, bitter opposition; but they have already made appreciable progress in awakening the public conscience and in compelling State Legislatures to enact more enlightened laws.

One phase of the "child rescue" campaign in which they have been signally successful is the creation of separate courts, reform schools, and probation systems for dealing with youthful offenders. The juvenile court plan originated barely more than ten years ago, in Illinois, when the Chicago Woman's Club, horrified at conditions found to exist in Cook County jail, engaged a lawyer to draw up a bill which should strike at the roots of the pernicious system of herding young boys with hardened criminals. The new method went on trial in 1899, and its merits were such that clubwomen everywhere began to insist on its extension. It has since been adopted by so many States that the day does not seem far distant when the entire country will have abandoned the old-time practice of "sending a boy to school at the jailer's"—a practice which virtually denies the juvenile delinquent any chance of developing into a decent and useful member of society.

Civil service reform has received organized support from the women of present-day America since 1894, when there was founded in New York the Woman's Auxiliary of the Civil Service Reform Association. The General Federation of Women's Clubs has a standing committee on civil service reform, as have a majority of the State Federations, and their influence is con-

stantly exercised toward a wider application of the merit system of appointment to public office. Reform in municipal politics is another problem enlisting their sympathetic coöperation, and much good work has been accomplished in this field by such organizations as the Woman's Municipal League of New York, the Civic Club of Philadelphia, and the Civic Federation of Denver. Clubwomen have likewise entered ardently into the movement to improve the sanitation, appearance, and general living conditions of American municipalities, and in many instances reforms have been brought about entirely as a result of their initiative. With their traveling libraries and art galleries they are reaching into remote communities, promoting education in the most isolated regions, fostering a love of the beautiful, and opening up vistas of enjoyment and recreation to many whose lives have formerly been a dreary monotony of unending toil.

This brings me to a fact which, taken by itself, would amply justify the woman's club movement in the United States. In a very real sense it is eradicating the last lingering remnants of the sectionalism that has more than once worked havoc to the nation. Among clubwomen there is no East and West, or North and South. They stand for a united people. In the biennial conventions of the General Federation of Women's Clubs they come together from all parts of the country to plan for the good of the whole country. Even the personnel of the General Federation's officers bears evidence to the absence of sectional lines. The president, Mrs. Philip N. Moore, is a Missouri woman, the vice presidents are from California and Illinois, the secretaries from New Jersey and Wyoming, the treasurer and auditor from Minnesota and Pennsylvania; while the eight directors represent as many States—Indiana, Kansas, Nebraska, New York, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, and West Virginia. The same principle obtains in the appointment of committees, and in the practical work-

ing out of Federation business the national idea is kept steadily to the fore, even where it is a question of dealing with problems primarily local rather than national in their significance.

Thus, there stands in the heart of Georgia's mill region a model country school where children are taught, in addition to the three R's, manual training, domestic science, and gardening. It was founded and is maintained at the joint expense of the Georgia Federation of Women's Clubs and the Massachusetts Federation, which has long been aiding the women of Georgia in combating the evils of child labor in that State. And similarly in Tennessee the Massachusetts Federation has established at Happy Valley a settlement like that established by the Tennessee Federation at Walker's Valley for the purpose of teaching the wives and daughters of the Tennessee mountaineers cooking, sewing, and other homely arts.

All this, of course, tends to the making of a happier, better, and more progressive people. Nor are the federated women's clubs by any means the only organizations of women laboring to the same beneficent end. While it is true that no other organization approaches the General Federation of Women's Clubs in the scope of its activities, there are many which, created for special objects, are rendering services whose value to the nation it would be difficult to overestimate. Preëminent among these is the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, with which will ever be associated the name of one of the noblest of American women, Frances E. Willard, who was its president for nearly twenty years. Its membership is even larger than that of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, having grown from a few thousand at the time of its founding, in 1874, to not less than half a million enthusiastic "white ribboners."

Perhaps their most noteworthy achievement is seen in the success attending their efforts to have the children of the United States—the "citizens of to-morrow"—instructed in the prin-

ciples of scientific temperance. They have secured mandatory laws to this effect in every State in the Union, besides a Federal law applying to the District of Columbia, the Territories, and all Indian and military schools supported by the government; and as a result fully eighteen million children in our public schools—according to statistics for which I am indebted to Mrs. Lillian M. N. Stevens, the present head of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union—are now receiving instruction as to the nature and effect of alcohol and other narcotics on the human system. It is also estimated that at least sixteen million children receive temperance teaching in the Sunday schools of the country, and that five hundred thousand of these are pledged total abstainers.

The recent remarkable growth of prohibition sentiment, which has swung so many States into the "dry" column, must unquestionably be attributed in chief part to this policy of beginning from the bottom upward by educating the future voter as to the harmful effects of the use of alcoholic beverages. Besides which, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union has directly and powerfully contributed to all the prohibition victories, as has been frequently and even officially recognized.

Not long ago, for instance, when Tennessee voted for prohibition, the Legislature of that State adopted a resolution declaring that "to the good and consecrated women of the Tennessee Woman's Christian Temperance Union, we feel a debt of lasting gratitude, and are sensitive to the whole work they have accomplished even in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds." And in Georgia chivalric prohibitionists insisted that "but for the untiring work and constant prayers of the women of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the victory would not have been won."

Aside from its anti-liquor activities, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union is earnestly engaged in advancing many other social reforms. It has done much for the great principle of

international arbitration. Advocates for better observance of the Sabbath find in it an unfailing ally. It is lending efficient aid to the movement to secure stricter laws for the protection of women and children. The welfare of children, indeed, has always been one of its principal objects. It has been instrumental in securing legislation prohibiting the sale of tobacco to minors. It has encouraged the establishment of school savings banks. It has advocated physical education in public schools, and has coöperated with the General Federation of Women's Clubs and other organizations in promoting the extension of the kindergarten. In all this, it has been actuated by the sound belief that the future of the country depends on the kind of training its boys and girls receive, and that by caring for their interests it will best live up to its motto—"For God and Home and Native Land." Altogether, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union must be accounted among the nation's richest assets.

Then, also quite apart from the club movement, there are organizations of women for the promotion of religion, benevolence, patriotism, good government, education, and in fact every worthy cause that one might name. Besides which, as need hardly be pointed out, the influence of the women of present-day America is immeasurably increased through their membership in societies composed of both men and women. In such societies the latter often hold most responsible positions, and can always be depended upon to do their share in realizing the aims of the organization. Frequently they do far more than their share, as in the case of the three thousand charitable organizations of New York City, where the greater part of the actual work is carried on by women.

Just how many women all told are thus enlisted under the banner of social progress it is impossible to say, al-

though the number must run far into the millions. It is still more out of the question to attempt to estimate the influence which they exercise collectively and as individuals. Who can measure, for instance, the influence exercised by Miss Helen Gould or Miss Jane Addams? It is almost twenty years since Miss Addams first took up her residence in Hull House, and began her settlement work among the toilers of Chicago. Under her able direction Hull House has developed into a centre of the highest civic and social life. Nine thousand people visit it every week during the winter months to attend lectures, debates, and theatrical entertainments; to gain instruction in industrial arts; to take part in its club life; and to study literature, science, history, civics, the languages, and the fine arts. Originally it comprised only four rooms on the second floor of an old residence; to-day it has spread out until it might figuratively be called a city within a city. Its fame has gone forth over the world, and the name of Miss Addams is an inspiration to thousands who have never seen her.

So with all American women, well known, little known, or not known at all, who are striving for the good of their country. One and all they radiate an influence whose cumulative effect must result, and will result, in the up-building of a greater America than the America of to-day.

Let me conclude by reminding my readers of what that wise Frenchman, Alexis de Tocqueville, wrote many years ago: "If I were asked to what the singular prosperity and growing strength of the American people ought mainly to be attributed, I should reply—to the superiority of their women."

Were De Tocqueville alive to-day, and were he to undertake a revision of his "Democracy in America," that is one passage which he assuredly would leave untouched.





MISS FRANCES STARR is dainty, petite, blue-eyed and soft-voiced, the type of woman who would suggest at first glance a cozy corner surrounded by groups of admiring young men, who would make a pretty picture pouring tea, or whom you might imagine as the heroine of a Southern idyl, listening to serenades behind a latticed window. She is in appearance a sort of delicate aquarelle of charming femininity. But there may be courage behind blue eyes, and the sensitive organism often responds most promptly to ambition. Half an hour's chat with Miss Starr is enough to reveal strength of purpose, intelligence, directness, and great frankness. There is nothing of the frail ingénue about her except, perhaps, the youthfulness of spirit which seems to bubble over as she talks, and which makes an interview with her an agreeable experience.

She enjoys the rather unusual distinction of having been made a star, in the theatrical sense, by the press rather than by the manager. And she likes to remember that the night she opened in "The Rose of the Rancho" her name in the cast was the twenty-fourth one from the top. True, hers was the principal rôle, but, as far as the printing went, she was only one of an ensemble. David Belasco had told her that her preferment rested with the critics. "It all depends on them and

you," he said. A few weeks later her name was flashed out in the electric signs.

Her more recent progress has been rapid, but the earlier steps were hard and tedious. She does not come of a theatrical family—in fact, the first announcement of her intention to become an actress met with the usual doubt and opposition. She had played in a church entertainment in Albany, her native town, and she remembers it as "a jolly experience," with lots of boys and girls, who told her how "great" she was. One newspaper, in fact, printed an account of the entertainment, mentioning her favorably, and the paragraph was treasured as something of first importance. When she did decide to go on the stage she cut out the "notice," feeling absolutely certain that it would impress the manager of a summer stock company, of whom she decided to seek her first position. Without a hint of her intention to any one, except a sister, who has been her constant sympathizer, she put on her first ankle-length dress, and started for the theatre. When the manager asked her what she wanted and whether she had had experience she presented him with the notice of the amateur entertainment, satisfied that it would be an irresistible indorsement of her talents. The manager was apparently not overpowered.

"Was that fixed up for you by a



friend?" was his interpretation of the "notice."

She insisted that she could act. "Try me," she urged, "and if you say I can't, I will go right home and never think of it again."

The manager told her that he had a one-act piece which he intended to put on and would give her a trial at the next rehearsal. If he had any serious idea of her ability it was not apparent in the selection of the rôle. For her first professional appearance Frances Starr, not yet out of her teens, was asked to act an injured English wife, who, with tear-stained cheeks and hair hanging down her back, went moaning about complaining of the wrongs heaped upon her by the husband who had deceived her. It was all very absurd, but to her it represented an opportunity, and, in her own words, "she never acted so hard before or since." In the retrospect she admits it must have been something awful. But no one told her so, and the manager expressed approval, handing her the leading rôle in "Nita's First," a familiar stock farce, in which she was to play on the following Monday night.

Her salary was to be ten dollars a week, and in ten weeks she played thirty parts, ranging from tragedy to farce, and making demands for unending mimetic variety. How she got through she says she cannot imagine; for, as she modestly admits, "I didn't know anything, and it simply shows what ignorance will do."

When the season ended she announced to her family that she was going to New York, and to the query as to what she would live on until she found employment, she naively answered that she had saved twenty dollars, and thought it would last for a while. When the family protested she remembered that she had once had an invitation to visit friends in this city, and she wrote telling them that, if agreeable, she would now come to stay with them for a little while. A few days later she was making systematic visits to the "outsides of theatrical offices."

"I would get on a Broadway car," she relates, "ride up to what I thought was the theatrical district, read all the managers' signs, and then go home. I couldn't summon up courage to go up the stairs into the offices. However, after a time I felt that I was wearing out my welcome at the house where I was staying. I still had part of my twenty dollars, but I saw my fortune dwindling, and necessity urged me on."

She had learned of a stock company at the Murray Hill Theatre, of which Mr. Henry V. Donnelly was the manager; and so she decided to go and see him. On three successive mornings she stood on the sidewalk in front of the theatre waiting for the manager, and after she had seen him enter the theatre she would turn on her heel and go home, unable to bring herself to the point of making the application for an engagement. Finally, however, she managed to see him long enough to be asked her business, and to be met with the familiar and hopeless injunction to leave her name and address. Much to her surprise, the same evening brought her a letter requesting her to come to the Murray Hill, and a few moments later, a telegram to the same effect. She walked into the manager's office the next morning, and he asked her curtly why she had not reported on the night before.

"It was after ten o'clock when I got your message," she answered, with girlish simplicity, "and, of course, I couldn't go out alone so late at night."

Mr. Donnelly's face relaxed.

"You said you were an ingénue," he remarked, "I guess you are. You certainly are ingenuous."

He explained that he had wanted her in a hurry, but another woman had been engaged in the meantime. Then he added: "I don't think she can do the part. I'll try you in it."

Miss Starr laughs when she recalls that "the part" which the other woman could "not do" consisted of just two lines: "Who's the girl in the muff?" and "Doesn't the church look lovely?"

Miss Starr played the "part" for one week, for which she received a sti-

pend of ten dollars. And, afraid of being considered unprofessional, she admits that she put on the airs of a Bernhardt at the first rehearsals.

In the meantime her good angel, her sister, came down from Albany, bought her a few pieces of comfortable furniture and established her in a little room in Lexington Avenue, and that night for the first time she felt absolutely alone. She cried herself to sleep, and, to make matters worse, discovered the next morning that there would be no part for her the following week. Two weeks later, however, she was cast for *Diana Stockton* in "Aristocracy," and it gave her an opportunity. Then she was made a regular member of the company, and her weekly salary went up to fifteen dollars. The next season, playing heroines, adventuresses, ingénues, everything in fact from boys to old women, she had added another five to her earnings; and successive seasons in stock companies in San Francisco, Boston, and New York, gave her no end of valuable experience. While she was playing at Proctor's Fifth Avenue, Charles Richman, then about to star in "Gallops," sent for her to come and play in his support. During the run of the play at the Garrick Theatre she had received a letter telling her that Mr. Belasco was coming down to see her. The date was not mentioned, but one night, as she was about to make her entrance, some one whispered to her: "David Belasco is in front."

"I had been ill all day," she relates, "and I mentally ejaculated: 'I simply cannot do it.' I felt that I had played miserably, and when Mr. Belasco's representative phoned to me to come to the office the next day, I blurted out: 'Why, you don't think there is any chance of his engaging me?' I didn't sleep all night, and the next morning I spent most of the time until my appointment fixing the feathers on my hat so that I would look presentable. I was pale and sad—way down mentally and physically—I must have looked like a little worn-out sparrow. When Mr. Belasco, in his quiet, dif-

fident way, walked into the office, I gasped. I had never seen a manager act like that. For years I had been looking forward to an interview with him, and now that the moment had arrived I couldn't speak a word. I felt myself getting cold all over."

"Why, you're just a little girl," was David Belasco's first comment as he studied the applicant.

After a desultory conversation, about anything and everything but business, he asked: "Would you like to come with us?"

The answer is to be found in Miss Starr's subsequent career. A few days later she signed a six years' contract, which "seemed a lifetime then"; and she did not see Mr. Belasco until after she had opened in "The Music Master" as leading woman with David Warfield. Then, one day, he sent for her again, and put her through a searching examination. He appeared to know every minute detail of her history, her tastes, her inclinations, and her character. The actress confesses that she sat in amazement as he revealed this intimate knowledge of her life and personality. And her selection for the principal rôle in "The Rose of the Rancho" followed.

But it is doubtful if any one seeing her in the somewhat artificial surroundings of the old California story, realized the powers which she has subsequently revealed in "The Easiest Way." To those who know her personally her selection for the unfortunate heroine of this story of sordid New York life seemed almost an affront, for there could be no greater difference than that which exists between the real Frances Starr and the heroine of Mr. Walters' remarkable play. But there can be no doubt that her presence in the rôle lends great value to the presentation, which with a woman of another type might be almost unendurable. Her acting of *Laura Murdoch* is a splendid accomplishment along the lines of realistic and emotional expression, and it lifts her into a position far more important and secure than any she has yet enjoyed.



## What the Editor Has to Say

SOME people like problem plays, some like musical comedy. There are those who shudder at a Broadway farce but who are delighted with the romantic drama. Very few are so catholic in taste as to cherish a predilection for Ibsen and prize fights, and it is a safe gamble that a man who chooses Marathon races as his favorite amusement isn't exactly crazy about the plays of George Bernard Shaw. Tastes in public entertainment are almost as varied as types of human beings. There is only one amusement that we can think of that has lasted through the years with perennial youth and that still continues to delight and interest all sorts and conditions of men and women, all kinds of girls and boys.

THIS is the circus. Some people pretend to be bored by it, but they go just the same. The circus never changes. There are the same sawdust rings, the same beautiful long-tailed horses, the same fluffy-skirted dreams of girls who ride the horses, the same immaculate ring masters, the same ridiculous clowns. We used to think, when young, that the pretty girl in the pink skirts was always in love with the ring master, who to our mind was dignified and handsome enough to enchant any female. As a matter of fact the girl is just as often married to the clown, who is generally anything but ridiculous in private life. We have all known all these things from childhood, if we were properly brought up—for we believe firmly that a judicious ap-

plication of circus tickets, accompanied by a half holiday for their use, should be part of the curriculum of every gently nurtured child. You are unfortunate indeed if you have not enough of the boy left in you to appreciate these things. Pink lemonade may be doubtful as to its ingredients and unhygienic in theory, but look at the round rosy faces of those who drink it with the greatest enjoyment, and consider after all that it is a great deal better than cocktails. No one ever died of nervous dyspepsia from eating peanuts. So far as your boyhood adoration of the beautiful girl riders is concerned, it was really platonic and never did you any harm. Perhaps your eyes are not so keen now to see the beauty. Perhaps it is because you wear glasses—and not the magic rosy specs of childhood—that the wrinkles and tired expression in her face show with undeniable plainness. But still it is the same old circus, the same elephants and prancing horses, the same redoubtable and untamable monarchs of the jungle, the same sawdust and cracking whip, the same glare and brazen noise.

OF course there is another side to it all. The immaculate and splendid ring master may be a drunken brute behind the scenes. The clown may be a thoughtful ascetic person given to much reading of Emerson. The girl poised in such fairy grace on the back of a milk-white steed may be the loving mother of many children, or the widow who still mourns for a lost hus-

band. Like as not, the lion himself, the magnificent king of beasts, may be sick and old and toothless underneath his majesty of mien, no longer terrible but pitiable.

YOU never perhaps thought of peeping behind the mask of the circus performer. There is always a man or woman there, and men and women are always interesting when you really know them. These men and women who live to amuse you and your children are even more interesting than most. They are engaged in the strangest of professions, and their lives have enough of romance to furnish forth a whole shelf of books. In next month's SMITH's you will catch the fragrance of some of it. The complete novel, written for the number by Mrs. John Van Vorst, is a tale of the circus glowing with feeling, human interest, and charm. "Kitty, My Own," is the name of the story, and we are sure that you will like it. Any one who reads magazines at all knows what a good writer Mrs. Van Vorst is. Her stories have appeared in practically every American magazine of consequence. Her last series, "The Diary of an American Girl Abroad," appeared in SMITH's.

TRUTH may be stranger than fiction, but in many ways fiction is truer than fact. Books filled with facts deemed absolute by one period became fallacious and faulty with the advent of newer discoveries, but good works of fiction never get out of date. Manners and dress may change with the changing years, but human nature remains the same. So if you have a healthy liking for good fiction and plenty of it, don't be ashamed of your taste. It's something to be proud of. It shows that you have imagination, which is one of the finest of all human qualities, and that your natural taste leads you in the right direction. In the present number of the magazine we are publishing more and better fiction than we ever managed to collect inside the covers of any one issue. The

August table of contents will show an even longer list of good stories. Besides the complete novel there are two series of stories, each of unusual value.

ONE series, "The Confessions of a Stenographer," starts in the present issue. The second installment is even better than the first. In August also will appear the third of the series of detective stories by C. N. and A. M. Williamson, entitled "The Cowboy Countess." You know by this time that these stories are about the best ever written by the authors of "My Friend, the Chauffeur." Then there is another Holman F. Day story, "The Seven Skippers of the London Lass." In it you will find Captain Sproul, tired of the dry land, venturing to sea again, bound across the main for Nova Scotia in as queerly manned and provisioned a vessel as ever left port.

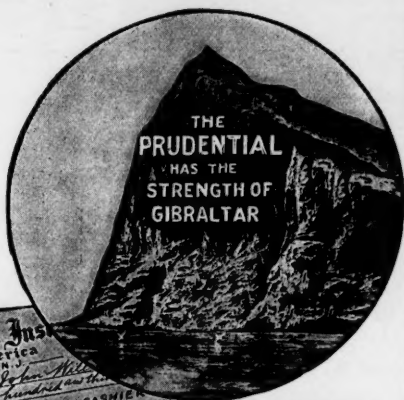
THESE features are only a small proportion of the fiction in the August magazine. "Patricia and I and the Baby" is a charming love story by William Patterson White. "A Diplomatic Consequence," by Emma Lee Walton, has also a strong love interest, and "The Elopement of Shirley," while it has a good title, is a great deal better than can be described in a title. There are also stories by Dorothy Canfield, Eleanor H. Porter and others.

IF you are at all interested in the stage you will be especially pleased by the collection of twenty-four full-page stage portraits which the August number contains. Then there is the article by Adolph Klauber, dramatic editor of the New York Times, giving his impressions of the personality of Edith Wynne Matthison. There is also an article on Wagner's "Parsifal" by that most interesting of writers on musical topics, Rupert Hughes, and a sensible and practical talk by Annette Austin on "A Girl's Chances for Work in New York."

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# Charlotte Russe à la **NABISCO**

NABISCO as an accompaniment to other dainties invariably adds to the attractiveness of the dish so graced.

The recipe here given is but a suggestion of the possibilities of

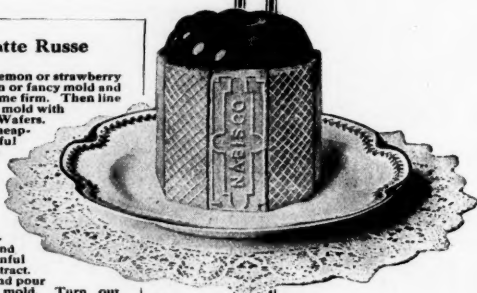
## **NABISCO** Sugar Wafers

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Also in twenty-five cent tins

### Charlotte Russe

Pour a little lemon or strawberry jelly into a plain or fancy mold and allow it to become firm. Then line the sides of the mold with Nabisco Sugar Wafers. Dissolve one heaping tablespoonful powdered gelatine in half a pint of milk, allow to cool, add gradually to half a pint of whipped cream, add two tablespoonfuls sugar, and half a teaspoonful of vanilla extract. Mix carefully and pour into prepared mold. Turn out when set.



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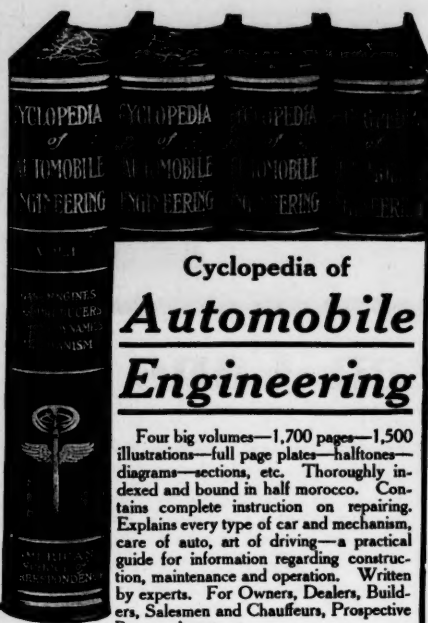
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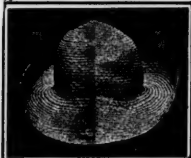
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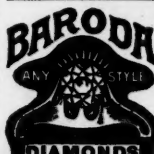


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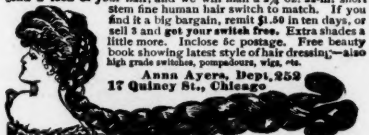


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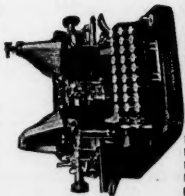
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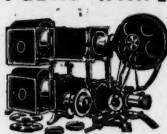
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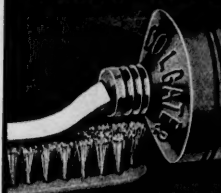
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